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University of Warwick

Centre for Cultural Policy Studies

PhD Thesis

**Religion and Cultural Policy in North Korea: The
Significance of Protestantism in Politics, Culture and
International Relations from the 1970s to the early 1990s**

By

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Word Number: 99893

For my parents and grandmother

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the following people: Oliver Bennett for his thoughtful guidance that has enlightened me to a new world since my MA year, Richard Perkins for his support and friendship, and my family for their endless encouragement.

Declaration

I declare that the present thesis is the result of my own work. I would also like to confirm that neither the thesis nor parts of it has ever been submitted before for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This thesis explores the significance of Protestantism in North Korean politics, culture and international relations from the 1970s to the early 1990s. It focuses on the activities of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF), against the background of inter-Korean and international relations as well as domestic changes in the Protestant sphere. In the early 1970s, in pursuit of an advantageous position over the South Korean government on issues surrounding inter-Korean relations, the North Korean government began to demonstrate a certain degree of flexibility in foreign policy. However, in the mid-1970s, long-running disputes on inter-Korean issues in the UN General Assembly ended in stalemate, with no clear plan for achieving a generally acceptable compromise. At this point, the DPRK regime turned its attention towards international non-governmental organisations. In order to form a united front against the South Korean government, the DPRK government established several non-governmental organisations, of which the KCF was an example, in order to make contact with these external groups.

Two main findings emerged from my analysis of the KCF's policies. First, the revival of the KCF and Protestant community in North Korea was based on political necessity. In other words, the KCF's exchange activities with Protestants outside North Korea were political despite their religious identity. Through examining the exchanges between the KCF, overseas Korean Protestants, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the National Council of Churches in [South] Korea (NCCCK), this thesis provides evidence that the DPRK government revived the KCF for the political purpose of gaining the upper hand over the South Korean

government in dealing with inter-Korean issues. In particular, what the North Korean regime expected to gain from the KCF's exchanges with Protestant organisations outside North Korea was moral ascendancy over the South Korean government.

Second, from an ecumenical standpoint, the thesis also argued that the political association between the KCF and other Protestant organisations outside North Korea was made possible thanks to their common Protestant identity. In order to associate the KCF with Protestant organisations outside North Korea, the DPRK regime understood that the authenticity of North Korean Protestantism must first be acknowledged by the outside world. To establish the ties of religious kinship, the DPRK not only revived a proper ecclesiastical form, including the establishment of two churches in western style, but also made changes to its legal regulations and even to the national Juche culture, in order to accommodate Protestant activities in North Korea.

In this thesis, Gramsci's theory of hegemony was employed as a research framework to reveal how the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism were confined not only to the religious sphere, but were often intertwined with politics. Religious policies are therefore considered as a form of implicit cultural policy; that is, an intangible political strategy that produces relevant normative values for stabilising a political regime.

Abbreviations

CCA: Christian Conference of Asia
CCC: Canadian Church Council
CCIA: Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
CCK: Christian Council of [South] Korea (*Hanguk Kidokgyo Chong Yeonmaeng*)
CCP: Chinese Communist Party
CPAJ: Catholic Priests Association for Justice [in South Korea]
CPKI: The Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence
DPRK: Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
DFRF: Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland
FETZ: Free Economic Trade Zone in Rajin-Sonbong
ICCC: International Council of Christian Churches
ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Right
ICNDK: International Christian Network for Democracy in Korea
KBF: [North] Korean Buddhist Federation
KCF: [North] Korean Christian Federation
KDP: Korean Democratic Party
KWP: Korean Workers' Party
NAE: National Association of Evangelicals
NCC Japan: National Council of Churches in Japan
NCKK: National Council of Churches in [South] Korea
NCCUSA: National Council of Churches in USA
NKCA: North Korean Christian Association
NKPPC: North Korea Provisional People's Committee
ROK: Republic of Korea (South Korea)
UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
USCIRF: the US Commission on International Religious Freedom
WCC: World Council of Churches
WEF: World Evangelical Fellowship
WFB: World Federation of Buddhists
YFP: Young Friends' Party

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Overview of the Thesis

Popular beliefs are themselves material forces.

- Gramsci, *The Prison Notebooks* (1971:165)

As the introduction to the entire thesis, this chapter presents an overview of this research project. It first introduces the purpose of this study, its analytical framework, argument, research questions and research methods. Next, it elaborates on the original contribution of the thesis, and finally, outlines the thesis structure.

Purpose of the Thesis

This thesis aims to provide an investigation into the [North] Korean Christian Federation's (KCF) policies between the 1970s and the early 1990s. The KCF was one of North Korea's religious organisations that prominently engaged in dialogue with the international community when humanitarian aid was provided to the country after a series of natural disasters in the mid-1990s (Flake and Snyder, 2004; Kim H. and Ryu, 2009).

In spite of the appearance of North Korean Protestant organisations on the international stage, the majority of anti-communist scholars and theologians in the US as well as in South Korea agreed that religion in the DPRK was marginal, persecuted and vulnerable. For example, the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) consistently

accused North Korea of violating religious freedom through the alleged implementation of ‘very extreme and repressive policies with regard to religion and every other human rights abuse under the sun’ in their annual report (The United States Government Printing Office, 1999). These reports stated that the DPRK regime established the KCF in 1988 along with other religious organisations for Buddhists, Cheondokyo, and Catholics, in an attempt to ‘blunt international criticism of its abysmal religious freedom record’ (USCIRF, 2013:110). The USCIRF was sceptical about the religious activities officially authorised by the government, and most of the statements in its reports were based on the premise that these institutions or venues, such as the Pyongyang Seminary, primarily existed not for genuine religious activities but as showpieces for foreign visitors or ‘for pursuing economic assistance from foreign donors’ (USCIRF, 2013:112). According to the USCIRF’s annual report, this seminary was opened in 2000, ‘only to facilitate the reception of donations from foreign faith-based NGOs’ (USCIRF, 2013:111).

However, the official documents from the World Council of Churches (WCC) archive described the KCF and the Pyongyang Seminary in a different way from the USCIRF. According to the WCC documents, it was not 1988 but 1972 when the KCF sent an official letter to the WCC, an incident that marked the very first appearance of the KCF on the international stage. Also, when the WCC members visited Pyongyang for field investigations into North Korean Protestantism in 1985, they witnessed that the Pyongyang seminary had already been opened in 1972. Before their investigation, the KCF did not have any communication with foreign or South Korean churches. It was not until the mid-1990s that the KCF began to request economic aid from foreign NGOs due to the natural disasters.

Therefore, the USCIRF's description that religious organisations in the DPRK were established for 'the reception of donations from foreign faith-based NGOs' is most likely erroneous.

In fact, between the 1970s and the early 1990s, before the occurrence of a series of natural disasters which threatened the economy of the DPRK, the KCF had consistently attempted to conduct frequent exchanges with anti-government Protestants in South Korea and western countries. However, these past activities by the KCF were mostly neglected by politicians and scholars in the US and Western Europe. The thesis sheds light on this hitherto neglected issue of the political impact of exchanges between the KCF and the South Korean and international ecumenical communities on inter-Korean issues in this period.

At this point, one question can be raised: Why did the DPRK regime establish the KCF? Or rather, what did the DPRK regime expect to gain from the establishment of the KCF? Unlike other socialist countries in Eastern Europe or China, where religious policies generally concentrated on domestic affairs, chiefly to control the huge religious populations, the DPRK regime had not suffered from any trouble with its religious believers within society. In the 1960s, Kim Jong-Il, the successor of Kim Il-Sung who founded the DPRK regime, proudly asserted that North Korea remained the world's first atheist state without any kind of apparent religious activities (Kim, J., 1966/1992:181). This can be interpreted as being due to the successful indoctrination of the atheistic national ideology namely, the Juche idea over the citizens. Nevertheless, the DPRK regime readily established a Protestant organisation and revived Protestant activities in the 1970s, albeit in circumscribed form. If the DPRK regime

had not aimed for humanitarian aids in the first places, what was the original purpose of establishing the KCF?

Based on this question, the major purpose of this thesis is to look into the reasons for the changes in the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism, focusing on the activities of the KCF in both domestic and international contexts. For this purpose, the thesis explores the hypothesis that the Protestant sphere in North Korea is a combined result of influences from both the international political situation and the latent Protestant leadership within North Korean society.

My main argument is that the DPRK regime established the KCF with political aims, that is, to improve its international relations through Protestant exchanges. From the 1970s, North Korea was no longer in isolation from international politics, but had become embedded in a set of international relations. The appearance of the KCF on the international stage was timed to coincide with this change in the DPRK's foreign and domestic policies towards Protestant activities, including the modification of its national ideology, the Juche idea. For the DPRK, the Protestant exchanges could be seen as a useful non-governmental channel for building a bridge with capitalist countries without diplomatic ties. Therefore, in my view, this was an example of how international affairs brought corresponding changes in the DPRK regime's policies towards Protestantism, both domestically and diplomatically.

The thesis investigates the ways in which such DPRK's policies towards Protestant activities related to other spheres, such as the political and diplomatic sectors. To analyse this

relationship, Gramsci's theory of hegemony is used as a research framework, focusing on the division of a whole state between civil and political societies. The former indicates a private sector formed on the basis of consensus, whereas the latter is grounded on coercive measures such as those enforced by the military, the police, and legal regulations. According to Gramsci, these two societies are not separate from each other, but complicatedly interwoven. In particular, a hegemonic power cannot be established or maintained without the consensus of civil society. Based on this theory, the thesis analyses the way in which the KCF pursued its 'diplomatic purpose' (belonging to political society) within the Protestant sphere (belonging to civil society).

I also understand this approach as a form of implicit cultural policy, as conceptualised by Jeremy Ahearne (2009). Distinguishing between explicit (nominal) cultural policy and implicit (effective) cultural policy, he defined implicit cultural policy as 'any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides', and explicit – or nominal – cultural policy as 'any cultural policy that a government labels as such' (Ahearne, 2009:143). In this thesis, I argue that different norms, ethics, and knowledge related to religions mostly regarded as a matter of private life are derived from their different political-ideological orientations, many of which are associated with historical and geo-political concerns. In this regard, religious institutions are understood as agents of implicit cultural policy, which promulgate specific normative-cultural values in association with their political-ideological interests.

Research Questions

The central research question of this thesis is: Why did Protestantism become an object of tactical significance in the DPRK's management of its national culture and in its international relations? Numerous anti-Protestant publications and films produced between the 1950s and 1960s by the DPRK regime, which will be discussed in Chapter Four, clearly show that religion was considered an obstacle to the regime's rule. Nevertheless, the DPRK regime introduced the KCF in the 1970s. Whether or not one considers its religious practice to be authentic, it is clear that the reappearance of the KCF gave rise to significant changes in the religious circumstance of North Korea. Furthermore, at the same time, the KCF was actively engaged in the Protestant exchanges in the international scene, playing a significant role in relations to South Korean and international ecumenical Church organisations (the NCCK and the WCC). To answer this question, the main argument of the thesis focuses on two points. First, the KCF's engagement in non-governmental diplomacy was indivisibly related to the political interests of the DPRK regime. Second, the KCF's diplomatic policies were inextricably linked to the changes in the DPRK's domestic policy towards national culture including Protestantism. Following on from this main research question are several research sub-questions, as elucidated below.

The first research sub-question is: Why was Protestantism significant in the nation-building process of the DPRK? The North Korean regime had expressed strong antagonism towards Christianity, regarding it as a cultural weapon of American imperialism. To reveal the origin of this antagonism, the thesis examines the fundamental reasons for the conflicts between Korean communism and North Korean Protestantism during the nation-building period in

political, economic and cultural contexts (See Chapter Three).

The second sub-question is: Why did the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism change from the 1970s onwards? In spite of antagonism towards Christianity, the DPRK established the KCF in 1972, and changed its policy on Protestant activities in North Korea. With this sub-question, the thesis examines the implicit reasons for the revival of North Korean Protestantism in the contexts of inter-Korean and international relations. Furthermore, the thesis also analyses the way in which the KCF associated itself with the state, especially in light of how the KCF's activities remained subject to governmental intervention during the nation-building process (See Chapter Three)

The third sub-question is: Why was Protestantism significant in the development of the Juche idea? This research question focuses on the conceptual transformations in Juche, the DPRK's national ideology, in order to better accommodate Christianity, albeit still restrictively. The thesis interprets the changes in the nature of Juche in relation to the united front strategy implemented by the DPRK regime as well as to international pressure (See Chapter Four).

The last sub-question is: Why did the Korean Christian Federation come to play a role in the DPRK's international relations, and how significant was that role? In addressing this question, the thesis discusses intensively the KCF's policies towards overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCCK between the 1980s and the early 1990s (before the occurrence of the natural disasters in North Korea). Through analysing the exchanges between the KCF and other Protestant organisations outside North Korea, the thesis cautiously argues that the KCF,

in association with the DPRK regime, actively sought to engage itself in inter-Korean issues, thereby attempting to develop its power and influence not only in the religious sphere but also the political sphere (See Chapter Five).

Research Methods

Prior to introducing the methods employed in this thesis, it is necessary to examine the limitations in conducting a study on North Korea. The first limitation is the gross inadequacy of data. Despite having a high profile in international politics, research on North Korea is hindered by a lack of material due to the country's closed-door policy. Since the collapse of the Soviet socialist system, the control over state publications has been strengthened and release restricted in North Korea. The reliability of the data that has been made public is also in doubt, because it mostly distorted to North Korea's advantage (economic data is the best example) (Yang, 2009). Furthermore, due to the nature of its exclusive system, it is difficult to either visit North Korea for the purpose of investigation, research or contact with local people for useful information. These restricted resources can affect the quality of research, which can result in the exaggeration of an exceptional incident as a general phenomenon about the country.

Second, there has been a tendency to view this country with politically, ideologically, and nationalistically biased perspectives. That is to say, preconceptions against North Korea that are concerned only with the logic of capitalism can hinder an accurate understanding of the country's reality. Research conducted in South Korea between the Korean War and the early

1990s was strongly influenced by antagonistic relations with North Korea, and was under strong surveillance, governmental control, and was shaped by political correctness. In addition, all access to resources on North Korea is still under the control of the South Korean government (Suh, 1998). During the regimes of Kim Dae-Jung (1998-2003) and Roh Moo Hyun (2004-2008), when the ‘Sunshine Policy’ led to an improvement of inter-Korean relations, North Korean studies sprang up and encompassed diversified political views, but materials from both Koreans still carry divisive political undertones.

For these reasons, this thesis designs a multi-faceted approach in order to challenge the existing epistemology employed by scholars as well as advocates, which focuses on totalitarianism and is ungrounded in the historical and cultural contexts of North Korea in many ways. To investigate the changes in official religious policies and legal regulations of religion in North Korea, this research gathers evidence through a broad analysis of North Korean primary sources, ranging from legal texts, dictionaries and academic journals to leaders’ writings and speeches, to newspapers, periodical magazines, and to domestic and internal media. Through these materials, the thesis aims to reveal the DPRK’s official stance towards Protestantism. However, this thesis cannot investigate the public reception of Protestantism in North Korea, given my inaccessibility to North Korea with a South Korean citizenship.

To examine the South Korean and foreign perception of North Korean Protestantism since the 1980s, I assembled a large collection of first-hand experiences of the Protestant sphere in North Korea from the WCC and the NCKK archives. These resources range from statements

on North Korean churches and pastors made by visitors corresponding with North Korean Protestants then; official reports by NGOs and international church organisations including the WCC, the National Church Council in the USA (NCCUSA), the NCKK, and individual scholars' analyses of publications written by governments or international organisations between the 1980s and the 1990s.

I also cross-checked these resources from the WCC, the NCCUSA and NCKK with the statements and testimonies of theologians, such as Kim Heung-Soo (2002), and journalists, such as Baik Joong Hyun (1998), who visited Protestant churches in Pyongyang and interviewed KCF members. In particular, the thesis relies on the book, *Is There a Church in North Korea?* (Baik, 1998), written by a South Korean journalist who conducted interviews several times with North Korean Christians – Protestants and Catholics – in Pyongyang between 1988 and 1992.

Further evidence was gathered for this thesis through conducting interviews with two Protestant NGO members who have held consistent connections with the KCF until now. One is Noh Jung Sun, a member of the NCKK, and the other is Erich Weingartner, former Executive Secretary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), who had a particular responsibility for the WCC human rights programme. Noh Jung Sun visited Pyongyang multiple times and has had a consistent relationship with KCF members through international conferences held by the WCC. Weingartner also provided useful information based on his long-time experience in North Korea. Nevertheless, the thesis bears the shortcoming that all collected data on North Korea's Protestant sphere are limited to

certain regions because the KCF's activities have concentrated on big cities.

Another limitation of my research was that I could not conduct direct interviews with local Protestants in North Korea or visit churches in Pyongyang due to the National Security Law. If I had had opportunities to interview local Protestants, I could have further analysed the extent to which they enjoyed freedom of religion and the way in which they individually affiliated to the Juche idea.

However, the thesis does not contain any interviews with North Korean defectors who have settled down in South Korea or abroad. North Korean refugees' representation of the plight of human rights in their testimonies is increasingly becoming a controversial issue in the international community. Recently, Shin Dong Hyuk, a famous North Korean defector who gave evidence to a UN Commission of Inquiry in 2013 on North Korea's human rights situation, admitted that his description of the DPRK prison camp was partly inaccurate (Fifield, 2015). Kim Hyeong-Deok, another North Korean defector as well as scholar of North Korean studies in South Korea, pointed out that refugees' experiences in North Korea were generally too limited to be reliable, due to restrictions on their residence in North Korea:

I cannot agree that North Korean refugees have better information on North Korea. Rather, North Korean refugees have limited knowledge on North Korea. What they know is only what they experienced where they were allowed to live by the government. Because of the restriction of residence, North Korean citizens cannot move without government permission. This is why I decided to study North Korean

studies after my defection to the South. That is, I realised that I did not know about North Korea except for my home town (Pressian, 2014)

In the same vein, in the beginning of the field work, I attempted to conduct interviews with North Korean refugees in South Korea, but they mentioned that they did not experience, hear or witness any kind of religious activity in their home town in North Korea. In my view, this is because many North Korean defectors, who ran away from poverty, came from remote regions near North Korea's border with China, while the KCF's activities were concentrated on big cities such as Pyongyang and Wonsan. Accordingly, following the advice from experts in North Korean studies, this thesis excludes all testimonies of North Korean refugees because of the difficulty in verifying their accuracy.

Transcriptions of Korean terms are done according to the official Korean Language Romanisation System represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the South Korean government.

To analyse all these collected materials and resources, the thesis uses Gramsci's theory of hegemony as the research framework. Gramsci's argument was that in modern civil society, the cultural sector – including religion – is organically linked with political society. Using the framework of Gramsci's theory hegemony, the thesis elucidates the crucial role of Protestant activities (the KCF) in the political sphere (the inter-Korean relations).

Original Contribution of This Thesis

The original contribution of this thesis is in the interpretation of DPRK's policies toward Protestantism within the framework of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. Applying Gramsci's theory and his concept of religion, the thesis shows that the DPRK's religious policies were not confined to the Protestant sphere, but were complicatedly interwoven with its political purpose in relation to inter-Korean issues. This perspective does not devalue Protestant activities in North Korea. Rather, the thesis argues that religion is perceived as an ideological weapon rather than a matter of private faith, not only by the DPRK, but also by Protestant organisations in the capitalist world – overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK – which have developed religious policies in their own ways to seek moral-cultural justifications of their political actions. In this respect, the Protestant churches and organisations examined in my thesis are understood as agencies of implicit cultural policy that promulgate specific normative-cultural values in civil society, developed on the basis of inter-Korean and international exchanges for decades, and which provide evidence of the rationality and flexibility of the DPRK regime in adjusting to international circumstances.

Finally, for the purpose of this research, I have translated into English many primary sources originally written in Korean and never translated before, in particular, a considerable amount of first-hand materials related to Protestant activities in North Korea. This will hopefully lay the foundation for further studies on the DPRK's religious policy.

Thesis Structure

In light of the main research question and research sub-questions, the subsequent chapters of the thesis are structured in the following ways. Following this overview of the entire thesis, Chapter One starts by developing Gramsci's theory of hegemony as the research framework of the thesis. The theory of hegemony is a crucial concept in this thesis for analysing Protestant activities as implicit cultural policy. This chapter aims not only to provide a useful theoretical framework for further discussion on the KCF's activities and the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism, but also to alert readers to the potential of culture, including religion, as a form of political power.

Following discussion of the theory of hegemony, the terms culture, cultural policy and religion are conceptualised in Chapter Two. This chapter also conceptualises religious policy as a form of implicit cultural policy, and religious institutions as agents of implicit cultural policy with a systemised power. The first section of this chapter introduces the concept of culture, cultural policy, and religion as political, cultural and ideological resources for a regime. The second section investigates the ways in which religious institutions can conduct implicit cultural policy in the contemporary world, paying particular attention to the influence that strategies of religious institutions have on secular society. Together, the two sections of this chapter provide concepts for the further analysis of Protestant policies conducted by the KCF, the WCC and the NCCCK in the remaining chapters.

Chapter Three examines changes in the DPRK's policies towards North Korean Protestantism and the KCF. This chapter focuses on the interweaving of political and historical contexts that

transformed and gave rise to more recent Protestant activities in the DPRK. The first section explores the historical background of the transformation of North Korean Protestantism before and after the establishment of the socialist regime, in order to figure out how the current relationship between Protestantism and the socialist regime was founded. Then, the second section features a full-scale investigation of the KCF's policies. In particular, the examination of the KCF's activities is divided into two categories: ecclesiastical and political. With this categorisation, the section shows that the revival of North Korean Protestantism was not derived by citizens' demand, but by the diplomatic necessity of extending the regime's international relations with capitalist societies. The third section investigates changes in the DPRK's constitutional and legal regulations, definitions of religion in official dictionaries, and the Supreme Leader's interpretation of religion. Extending from the second section, this section continues to investigate the transformation of the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism in the legal system, which, in Gramscian terms, can be considered coercive measures belonging to political society.

Chapter Four examines the ideological relationship between Protestantism and the Juche idea, the DPRK's national ideology. This chapter investigates the way in which the Juche perspective on Protestantism has been ideologically transformed through a comparison of the situation before and after the establishment of the KCF. The first section discusses the general outline of the development of Juche and its normative cultural values. Through this discussion, I highlight the incompatibility between the original Juche idea and Protestantism. The second section turns to the anti-Protestant perspective inculcated in Juche before the establishment of the KCF by examining theoretical literature and cultural works, such as films. The last

section explores the transformation of the Juche perspective on Protestantism since the 1980s. The discussion in this section reveals what influenced the DPRK regime to replace hostility towards Protestantism with tolerance within its national ideology.

Chapter Five examines the way in which the KCF politically contributed to the DPRK's policy on inter-Korean relations through its religious exchanges with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCKK. It focuses on the period between the 1980s and the early 1990s, before the occurrence of natural disasters in North Korea. The first section presents the political issues on the Korean Peninsula that were being addressed in the international scene. This is helpful for understanding the political context of the KCF's policies on non-governmental diplomacy. Then, in the second, third, and the fourth sections respectively, the chapter examines the KCF's policies towards overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK. Special attention is in these sections to the establishment of the relationship between the KCF and Protestant organisations in capitalist societies, and the way in which the DPRK gained an advantageous position over the ROK on inter-Korean issues thanks to the KCF's activities. Finally, the last part of the fourth section analyses the achievements and failures of these policies in the international Protestant community from a Gramscian perspective.

The concluding chapter will summarise the research project by highlighting the intermingled nature of the KCF's religious and political policies. Based on the analyses in Chapters Three to Five, the conclusion will provide answers to the four research sub-questions and, in doing address the overarching research question of the thesis. Finally, the conclusion will also

suggest areas for further research on North Korean religious policy and religious organisations, underscoring them as active agents that can affect and be affected by political pursuits.

Chapter 1. The Research Framework: Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony

Introduction

Chapter One explores Gramsci's hegemony theory as a research framework that can be applied to the analysis of religious and cultural policies in the DPRK. More specifically, the aim of the chapter is to anatomise Gramsci's theory and then develop it as a research method for analysing Protestant activities in the DPRK (Chapter Three) and the DPRK's Juche idea (Chapter Four), the exchange activities of the KCF with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCCK (Chapter Five). As a Marxist, Gramsci paid attention to the dominant position of the capitalist system which has been maintained longer than expected by Marx, who had predicted the end of capitalism through the revolution of proletariat in conflict with the rule of bourgeois class. In order to figure out the prolonged life of the capitalist system, he studied the relationship between the classes, focusing on the consent rather than the conflict between the classes, and the role of ideology as an adhesive between them. As this thesis argues that the DPRK's regime has maintained its power on the basis people's ideological consent as much as coercion, Gramsci's study can be useful for analysing the ideological strategy of the DPRK regime; how to take and maintain its leadership; how to vanquish Korean Protestantism, its ideological rival, during the nation building; and why it revived Protestantism since 1970s.

Literature Reviews

The Prison Notebooks (1971), written by Gramsci between 1929 and 1935, circulated as the textbook of his theory of hegemony. However, his manuscripts including letters, journalistic articles, and party documents, have not been completely systematised or revised in his short life. Due to the fragmentary and incomplete nature, his theory has been consistently reconstructed by his followers rather than inherited in its original form. Over the past years, his successors creatively reformulated Gramsci's theory of hegemony reflecting their own societies through rearrangement, annotation and translation. Their achievements have testified to the importance of his work for a variety of disciplines, including politics, international relations, globalisation studies, postcolonial studies, and literary and cultural studies.

Among them, since the late 1960s, some Marxist theorists in Britain, such as Raymond Williams (1976; 1977; 1981; 1991), Stuart Hall (1980/2011; 1986), Roger Simon (1991), and Paul Ransome (1992) developed Gramsci's thought from the culturalist perspective. Raymond Williams was the first thinker who broadened the horizon of Gramsci's legacy from the politics to culture. In his *Marxism and Literature* (1977), Williams elucidated that 'hegemony' is 'active social and cultural forces', which relates the whole social process of production to inequalities in everyday life (Williams, 1977:108). He also categorised culture into three forms, applying Gramsci's concept of hegemony: dominant, residual and emergent forms of culture. The main gist of Williams' thoughts contains the following three strands: the dominant cultures only secure hegemonic power by means of education, philosophy, religion, and art that can legitimise the benefit of the dominant group; residual culture are composed of traditional meanings and values, which are no longer dominant but still influential; Williams

also distinguishes between the ‘genuinely emergent’ forms of culture and ‘incorporate’ forms of new culture (Williams, 1991). By this categorisation, he figured out the complex aspects of hegemonic conflict highlighting the relationship between dominant and other cultures, which are intricately interwoven with each other. However, Williams’ redefinition of hegemony and hegemonic conflicts, featured in culture, are still circumscribed within the class system.

Meanwhile, in analysing the ascendancy of Thatcherism and the crisis of labourism in Britain between 1980s and 1990s, other British scholars employed Gramsci’s thought of hegemony in a more extensive way, encompassing not only the class but also other subjective identifications including ethnicity, nation and race. Observing the British leftist movement, Simon (1991) and Ransome (1992) also argued that working class movements can acquire hegemony only if they engage broader moral issues beyond the class interests, for instance, peace, civil liberties, or gender equalities. Particularly, Hall drew attention to Gramsci’s emphasis on different national characteristics and regional unevenness in *Gramsci’s Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity* (Hall, 1986). Pointing out that racial or ethnic discriminations are differently structured and practiced in each society and even in each sector of the same society, he claimed that there is no ‘existing law of historical development’, which influences uniformly throughout the world, but each society – and each sector of the society – has different impacts from the social development based on their own historical experiences, which brought about different antagonisms (Hall, 1986:11). Hall’s insight ultimately disproves the ‘Eurocentric model’ of capitalist development demonstrated by the Marxist orthodoxy. According to him, if we seek to unlock how hegemony enables the regime to function in each society, we should more seriously scrutinise its culture, society, nation,

ethnicity and gender, historically composed in a different way.

As such, British left-culturalists focused on Gramsci's analysis of society, which combined culture with broader determinant factors in mind, including economic conditions. This approach is distinguished from classical Marxism, which clings to 'economism' that reduces all kinds of dimensions in social formation to the economic level in a deterministic way. However, David Forgacs (1989), another prominent Gramscian theorist, criticised that their approach slanted towards the cultural and political aspects of the hegemony while underestimating the economic elements. When it comes to their analysis of Thatcherism, Forgacs argued that they failed to develop it as a political and ideological level because of the lack of analysis of its economic and social regulation, 'as *both* a more or less coherent strategy for the modernisation of the UK economy *and* a conservative recomposition of social and moral life' (1989:85, italics original).

On the other hand, in the field of international relations (IR), neo-Gramscianism has been developed by Robert W. Cox (1987; 1993), Stephen R. Gill (1993), and Mark Rupert (1993;1995) on the foundation of Gramsci's thought. Applying the extended Gramsci's concept of hegemony from the national to IR, neo-Gramscian scholars provide an alternative interpretation of the power relationship within the world capitalist system. First of all, they emphasise the impact of production process on the world order. In Cox's *Production, Power and World Order* (1987), the pioneering work on the neo-Gramscian approach to international relations, his major premise is that production is the material basis 'for all forms of social existence' (Cox, 1987:1). Based on this premise, Cox argued that the contemporary

world order is upheld by the mutual relationship between production and the states at the international level, and this relationship is amalgamated by the ideational configuration, such as ideologies; therefore, in order to understand how the world order is sustained, we need to analyse the interplay between production and power. Following Cox, Rupert analysed the relationship between the US' neo-liberal hegemony after World War II and mass production in *Producing Hegemony: The Politics of Mass Production and American Global Power* (1995). Through the case study of the Ford Motor Company and its labours, he presented the mass production methods supported by American capitalism was the driving force of construction of global neo-liberalism in the shape and direction of the international capitalist economy, as these methods cut across other capitalist states.

Furthermore, in the analysis of the formation of the global order, Stephen Gill (1993), a leading neo-Gramscian IR scholar, embeds Gramsci's thinking on historical materialism in IR theory, as a means of explaining the instability of the world order. He argued a particular historical structure, externalised in the context of habits, belief, and norms, must be considered as an essential element to explain the world capitalist system. Other neo-Gramscian scholars also provide compelling accounts of the link between the relations of social forces and specific historical patterns of capitalist development; for instance, Rupert (1995) addressed the historical evolution of relationship between Americanism and Fordist or mass production.

However, some theorists challenged these neo-Gramscian approaches with reference to culture. As the key weakness in neo-Gramscian theory, Jonathan Joseph (2008) pointed out

that, in the neo-Gramscian IR theory, the movements of resistance and counter-hegemony against global capitalism led by the US are underestimated, ranging from the World Social Forums to anti-globalisation campaigns in Mexico and South Africa. Pasha (2008) also exposed its enclosure with the western-centric narratives of capitalist industries (i.e., the US and its allied countries in the Western Europe). This narrative merely assumes the diffusion of western capitalism through the 'Third World', such as Asia and Latin America, while disregarding the violence in its colonial process of inculcating capitalism, which led to the different historical experience of capitalism from the West in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pasha argued that neo-Gramscian approaches in IR cannot embrace the contradictory aspects of modern industrialisation between colonial and colonised countries if they adhere to the western centric accounts of capital history only.

Another important shortcoming of neo-Gramscian approach pointed out by Pasha is the neglect of 'particularity of culture,' which can be emblematic in the case of counter-hegemony. Gramsci recognised culture as a materialisation of consciousness. From his perspective, culture is materially constitutive of social relations of production and ideological forms that mark any given epoch. However, according to Pasha, neo-Gramscian theory cut off the influence of culture from the schema of political or economic activity, although political or economic activity bears the fruit of cultural particularism in each society.

Theory of Hegemony

Since Gramsci's hegemony theory has not been used in the study of the establishment of Juche idea as well as the study of the relationship between Protestantism and Communism in

the Korean Peninsula, this chapter rigorously examined the existing literature relevant to Gramsci's theory of hegemony, particularly Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, and focused on some key theoretical notions: 'historic bloc', 'common sense', 'civil society', 'the state' and 'intellectuals'. For scrutinising the Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*, the original source of his theory of hegemony in Italian, this thesis uses *the Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (1971), edited and translated in English by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, which has brought a wider readership outside Italy. Also, this chapter elucidates the way in which Gramsci's concept of hegemony relates to developments in thinking about cultural policy.

Gramsci analysed social structure with a focus on the relations of multiple social forces, and with the differentiation of the 'various moments or levels' in the development of such a conjuncture (Gramsci, 1971:180-1). First of all, he understood 'class' differently from classical Marxism. In capitalist society, the relationship between classes cannot be explained by a mere coercive system for exploitation; society is structured in much more complicated ways, with respect not only to a common economic background but also to the sharing of ideological, political, and cultural interests. In this regard, he believed that each society is a totality intertwined with different levels of articulation in different combinations. That is, each society has been developed within the relations through not only economic, but also political, social, and ideological struggles; in the coexistence of plural identities and ideologies, the multi-faceted aspects of self-consciousness manifest themselves. According to Gramsci (1971), this diversification is presented not as an individual but as a collective phenomenon resulting from the relationship between the self and the ideological discourses in the cultural sphere. When a specific group's solidarity transcended the limits of economic

reason, bringing moral, political, and cultural unity, Gramsci called it the moment of *hegemony*.

Although Gramsci did not define hegemony precisely, he often characterised the term as ‘the spontaneous consent given by the great mass of population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group’ (Gramsci, 1971:1519), which is an ultimate set of forces for maintaining the status quo in their political order. However, at the same time, he also stressed that “‘pure” spontaneity does not exist in history’ (Gramsci, 1971:196). That is, consent between the groups is not possibly innocent but implicitly based on the prestige that a fundamental group has enjoyed. Therefore, hegemony can be seen as an invisible force handled by the vested group to maintain the status quo’s interests. Gramsci utilised this concept of hegemony to denote a change of paradigm in the mode of governance: from dominance to leadership. Hegemony is an implicit power which, standing in contrast to explicit coercion, enables a society to establish or maintain a historical agenda, under the moral and intellectual leadership in a specific formation or among a constellation of social forces. He noted that, in the governance of a privileged class, their intellectuals’ leadership eliciting the citizens’ active obedience is equally as important as coercive power itself:

[The] supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as ‘domination’ and as ‘intellectual and moral leadership.’ A social group dominates antagonistic groups, which it tends to ‘liquidate’, or to subjugate perhaps even by armed force; it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise ‘leadership’ before winning governmental power (this indeed is one of the principal

conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to ‘lead’ as well (Gramsci, 1971:57-8).

Gramsci argued that building and maintaining hegemony requires a broader alliance across class. As mentioned above, hegemony is established by inculcating specific values in various domains such as politics, economy, ideology, culture, and morality, which is to say that social struggle in capitalist society is not always in accord with economic class-conflict. Rather, it requires other popular and democratic aspects capable of knotting classes together beyond economic interests. In other words, there are multiple reasons other than economic class for people to confront each other, such as values in nationalism, gender, race, ideology or ethnicity. Along a broad and diversified spectrum of social antagonism, hegemony – together with counter-hegemony – forms a social polarisation in a more complex way going beyond economic discrimination. To elaborate further on the concept of hegemony, it is necessary to scrutinise the microscopic aspects of hegemony as explained by Gramsci.

a) The Concept of Historic Bloc

The multi-dimensional character of hegemony is clearly revealed in the relevant concept of historic bloc. Historic bloc refers to the complex circumstance in which hegemony is exercised by the dominant group through the construction of a bloc of social forces capable of being sustained for the whole historical period. It is an assemblage of multifarious forces or apparently disparate social practices ranging from politics and economics to culture. In this constellation, a group will become hegemonic if it successfully obtains the consent from the

other groups to amalgamate its own interests into the others' interests, thereby becoming an emblematic group in a certain social formation.¹

According to Gramsci, the establishment of historic bloc is essential for the dominant group, which has economically superior control, but it is never absolute; it is consistently challenged by the malcontent discriminated against in the distribution of wealth. However, in a historic bloc, where the ethical measure of coherence and identity is provided, the discriminated people are faithful to the mutual ideals while side-tracked from their dissent, grievance or rage. In this sense, historic bloc is more than a simple alliance of social classes. It is a broader concept of entity encompassing political, cultural and economic aspects of a certain social formation based on their own historical experience. This bloc is an enlarged unity created by a dialectical interaction of each aspect or element in social formation. Gramsci further designated these elements into subjective and objective, or alternatively, structural and super-structural ones:

Structures and superstructures form a 'historic bloc.' That is to say, the complex contradictory and discordant *ensemble* of the superstructures is the reflection of the *ensemble* of the social relations of production (Gramsci, 1971: 366, italics original).

¹ On the relationship between hegemony and historic bloc, Adamson has argued that historic bloc is a necessary but not sufficient condition to establish hegemony. '[H]egemonies always grow out of historical blocs, but not all historical blocs are hegemonic' (Adamson, 1980:177-8). This is a crucial point because throughout history, societies have produced a series of alliances or blocs on the basis of mutual interest, but only very few of them actually stood in the position of dominance for a long period of time.

In this sense the establishment of a historic bloc entails a complex, politically contestable and dynamic process. In order to establish and maintain both historic blocs and hegemony successfully, Gramsci indicated three essential conditions: a national-popular collective will, an active leadership, and an organic cohesion between the classes.

A National-Popular Collective Will: When creating a new historic bloc for a new hegemony with one fundamental social group dominating over other groups, the new alliance between the classes must move on from their initial motivation of mutual economic interests to universal values. In other words, a historic bloc is able to gain hegemony only when it develops a broader perspective including ethical, political, and cultural values above the economic self-interests of a certain class, which will then lead to the coalescence of diverse social forces into a broader alliance. Gramsci illustrated this situation as the moment for a ‘national-popular’² collective will: The moment when each of these different forces contributes to the advance toward a common goal whilst preserving its own autonomy. In addition, he explained that the national-popular collective will is generally aroused at a historically specific moment, such as asocial exigencies (change of political regimes) or long-term historic projects to modernise society, when mass mobilisation is necessary and possible. For example, he cited the Jacobins’ manoeuvres in the nation-building project in eighteenth century France, which ‘awakened and organised the national-popular collective will, and founded modern states’ (Gramsci, 1971:131). In such a moment, national hegemony plays a pivotal role in engaging people of different classes into a specific condition.

² The ‘national popular’ is a concept in relation to the position of the masses within the culture of a nation. Simon (1991) supposed that the notion of ‘national popular’ originates from cultural policies of the Italian Communist Party since World War I.

An Active Leadership: Gramsci reiterated the point that hegemony does not emerge spontaneously but must be actively created. For the successful establishment of hegemony in a historic bloc, the moral and intellectual leadership must be already exercised before a significant change in society: ‘A social group can and indeed must already exercise “leadership” before winning governmental power (this is one of the principal conditions for the winning of such power); it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercises power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp it must continue to “lead” as well’ (Gramsci, 1971:57-8). In other words, it is barely possible to establish an *ex post facto* hegemony. If the alliance gains power first through violence or coercive measures, without building up a moral leadership, their dominance is fragile due to a lack of hegemonic legitimation. Furthermore, even after gaining power and building a hegemony, the dominant group must maintain its moral leadership to curb the potential for antagonistic movements, or the emergence of counter-hegemony. This means that hegemonic control is constantly indispensable for preserving the system. In this sense, the stability of specific social orders depends on the extent to which the dominant group can maintain its hegemony by virtue of its moral and intellectual leadership, and defend against the potential counter-hegemony that will always exist.

An Organic Cohesion: Gramsci clearly indicated the need for constant communication between different classes within the same hegemonic group. A new bloc is formed when the new ruling class exercises alternative hegemony over the other classes. To assimilate other groups into a new social structure forged by a new hegemony, the dominant group must make

a persistent effort to reach certain compromises between different groups through intensive dialogues in all sectors of the society.

An appropriate political initiative is always necessary to liberate the economic thrust from the dead weight of traditional policies – i.e. to change the political direction of certain forces which have to be absorbed if a new, homogenous politico-economic historical bloc, without internal contradiction is to be successfully formed. Force [...] can be employed against enemies but not against a part of one's own side which one wishes rapidly to assimilate and whose 'good will' and enthusiasm one need (Gramsci, 1971:168)

In this process, organic intellectuals who do not form or belong to any distinct class or group in the social structure play a key role in social cohesion. While traditional intellectuals only represent the interests of the dominant group, Gramsci believed that organic intellectuals are capable of connecting the ruler with the ruled organically, by articulating a unifying ideology through the development of proper knowledge,³ technologies and organisations. Their participation in various social practices contributes to the solidarity between different groups, as they then produce a common identity capable of uniting members from different groups. In this sense, we can argue that the basis of hegemonic leadership is created by intellectual activities.

³ Gramsci claimed that knowledge is one of the main hegemonic apparatuses: '[T]he realisation of a hegemonic apparatus, in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain, determines a reform of consciousness and of methods of knowledge: it is a fact of knowledge, a philosophical fact' (Gramsci, 1971:365-6).

b) Philosophy (Ideology) and Common sense

Gramsci deployed the terms 'common sense' and 'philosophy' as key elements in his concept of hegemony. It may be inferred that Gramsci's 'philosophy' is equivalent to the term 'ideology'⁴ in a Marxist sense, which refers to a specifically formal and articulated system of meanings, values and beliefs in reflection of a world view or a particular class interest in a specific historical moment.⁵

In comparison, the term 'common sense' is more complex from a systematic point of view. The ethical measure of a specific historic bloc is provided through the propagation of 'common sense.'

Common sense is not a single unique conception, identical in time and space. It is the 'folklore' of philosophy, and, like folklore, it takes countless different forms. Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is (Gramsci, 1971: 419).

⁴ In Prison Notebook, Gramsci clearly described ideology as a 'spontaneous philosophy' that contains language as a totality of determined notions and concepts, common sense and good sense, and aspects of religion in terms of 'the entire system of beliefs, superstitions, opinions, way of seeing things and of acting, which are collectively bundled together under the name of "folklore"' (Gramsci, 1971:323)

⁵ Williams (1977) mentioned that ideology is one of the important concepts, in which meanings and values are systemised in conformity with a specific class interest.

Elsewhere in the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci remarked that common sense is a coherent systemic force subordinated under a hegemony but unknown to the mass (Gramsci, 1971). With reference to the term common sense, Gramsci connotes a people's worldview perceived in an unconscious and uncritical way. As an antithetical concept to 'good sense', which is based on critical investigation, common sense, which encompasses certain values, behaviours, beliefs, tastes, desires, ethical norms, and sentiments, tends to be produced in favour of the ruling class, and is disseminated and cultivated through specific cultural practices. In this sense, these cultural practices, which seem to have an apolitical nature at first glance, ultimately function as an efficient political tool, for they promulgate ruling class' perspective regarding it as universal. In other words, by inculcating common sense, culture is instrumentalised in order to rationalise, and also to naturalise, a reality in which the general public takes a social hierarchy for granted, and the ruled are victimised while the ruling class are privileged. Therefore, Dodge (2009) argues that culture is the sphere where common sense secures its own influence by invisible assimilation into other areas such as politics and economics.

Despite its tendency slanted toward a specific class, which forces the ruled people to surrender their political and economic power, the term 'common sense' for Gramsci does not only carry negative connotation. Historically, it also had a positive potential because it was not a stable category, but a transformative one combining itself with specific ideologies. According to Gramsci, although the two elements – common sense and ideology (philosophy) – occur separately, the latter (ideology) is, if successfully generated, destined to be integrated

into the former (common sense).

Common sense is not something rigid and immobile, but is continually transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life. 'Common sense' is the folklore of philosophy, and is always half-way between folklore properly speaking and philosophy, science, and economics of the specialists (Gramsci, 1971:326).

Paying attention to the potential for change of common sense through the absorption of a specific ideology reflective of a certain class interest, Gramsci noted an ambivalent aspect in common sense according to the relations between different forces: Common sense can be the base on which the ruling class constructs their hegemony, but it can also be the base for the counter-hegemony from the ruled class as well if they manage to develop a proper counter-ideology. Due to the malleability of common sense in conformity with different ideologies, the dominant class is persistently required to answer to the general interests of the ruled class, or to the consensus between social classes. Thus, in Gramsci's theory, the society is understood not as a static object, but in terms of a 'continuous process of formation and superseding of unstable equilibria (on the juridical plane) between the interests of the fundamental group and those of the subordinate groups' (Gramsci, 1971:182). These Gramsci's terms of 'philosophy' and 'common sense' will be further discussed in accordance with the concept of religion in the next chapter.

c) Civil Society and the State

Civil society refers to the realm for the promulgation of common sense in order to build a historic bloc. As a concept it first appears in Gramsci's differentiation between the apparatuses used for governance in two types of societies, namely

[t]he one that can be called 'civil society,'⁶ that is, the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private', and that of 'political society' or 'the state.' These two levels correspond on the one hand to the functions of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the state and 'juridical' government (Gramsci, 1971:12)

In political society, coercive measures such as the military, the police, the law courts, and prisons are officially institutionalised, as well as administrative organisation in trade, taxation and social security. On the contrary, civil society is one primary source of consensual hegemony, and is comprised of 'the so-called private sector' including institutions of religion, health, education, journalism and culture. Related to this aspect of civil society, Rupert (1993) demonstrates civil society as the embodiment of a complex network of social practices as well as social relations between different groups, where a certain hegemony may be constructed or challenged.

⁶ The term 'civil society' is derived from Hegel. In Hegel's analysis, the term 'civil society' was originally used to designate the sphere within the economic structure. According to Simon, Gramsci revised the term 'civil society' in accord with his hegemony theory, whereas Marx and Engels, who were also influenced by Hegelian philosophy, abandoned this term in their theory of historical materialism, as they assumed that civil society would disappear with the abolishment of class system (Simon, 1991).

As a realm of hegemonic competition, it entails the struggle not only between different classes but also the popular democratic struggles brought about by groups congregated along various issues such as gender, race, generation, religion, nation, and so on. Gramsci termed these struggles as intellectual-moral reform, in which a recently developed ideology tends to be brought to the fore for the struggle against conventional thought, forming a unity of economic, political, and cultural-moral aims. Through cultural and ideological struggles in this sphere, either the privileged group may consolidate their hegemony, or the subordinate groups can organise their opposition and establish a counter-hegemony aiming to transform the prevailing social formation.

The concept of ‘civil society’ is actually used to describe the dynamic interaction between cultural and moral power among various social actors. Furthermore, although these actors deal with ethical issues that are ostensibly private, their activities are implied in socio-economic conditions that enable a certain type of production to exist and become dominant.

Undoubtedly the fact of hegemony presupposes that account be taken of the interests and the tendencies of the groups over which hegemony is to be exercised [...] that the leading group should make sacrifices of an economic-corporate kind. But there is also no doubt that such sacrifices and such a compromise cannot touch the essential; for though hegemony is ethical-political, it must also be economic, must be based on the decisive function exercised by the leading group in the decisive nucleus economic activity (Gramsci, 1971:161).

It means that any compromise made in civil society is directed to the essential economic interest of the dominant group that holds hegemony in its hands. Gramsci would still argue that the cultural-ideological values asserted by hegemony are not always reducible to the economic level, although they have been closely related to them. Rather, these values function in such a way as to reach a compromise between different economic classes within a hegemony, so that peaceful coexistence among classes can be reached. This idea has been exemplified with the 'mixed' class character of the national liberation movement or social modernisation movement in history.⁷

Despite his distinct designation, Gramsci understood 'civil society' in internal relation to political society, as civil society in his theory implicitly operates by aiming to assimilate the popular masses into the hegemonic group's control over production and economy. In other words, social relations in civil society are closely linked to relations of power (i.e. the coercive relations of the state). In parallel with the complexity of the formation of civil society, Gramsci also reconceptualised the state. In his theory, the state is no longer conceived as a mere administrative and coercive apparatus, but a unitary system, where 'hegemony (i.e. civil society) [is] protected by the armour of coercion (political society)' (Gramsci, 1971:263).

Gramsci explicitly designated the western capitalist country as an extended state, or what he

⁷ Sassoon, a Gramscian scholar who focused on Gramsci's complex notion of the state, argued that it is crucial to understand precisely the relationship between different groups in civil society, allied under the hegemony of the dominant group, so that the dominant group 'can formulate its tactics bearing in mind the ethical and cultural *form* of the hegemony of its opponents but also economic consequences which provide the limits or boundaries of compromises by the "leading group"' (Sassoon, 1980: 133, italics original).

calls ‘integral state’, in contrast to the general notion of the state. He used Machiavelli’s half-man, half-beast metaphor of the centaur to denote the necessary dual combination of consent and coercion in the power of the integral state (Gramsci, 1971). The metaphor implies that the integral state should be seen as a complex entity entailing ‘a hegemonic equilibrium based on a combination of force and consent, which are balanced in varying proportions, without force prevailing too greatly over consent’ (Gramsci, 1975, quoted in Fontana,⁸ 1993:141). That is, the dichotomised nature of the relationship between consent and coercive force stands in inverse proportion to each other: the more certain group achieves consent from other groups in a civil society, the less it will rely on force to govern. Thus, it is difficult to analyse the public (coercive) and private (consensual) sectors separately in a state of governance because they are inextricably intertwined with each other in reality.

d) Intellectuals

In order to gain power through hegemonic competition in civil society, Fontana (1993) stressed the role of intellectuals for education in Gramsci’s theory. As discussed above, hegemony is established through ‘intellectual and moral leadership,’ whose primary purpose is to create consent and persuasion through ideology. Social actors involved in this process are called intellectuals’ by Gramsci but not only as producers of ideology, but also promoters of hegemony. Fontana commented on the role of intellectuals in civil society that ‘[a] social group or class can be said to assume a hegemonic role to the extent that it articulates and

⁸ Benedetto Fontana is the Gramscian scholar with a remarkable achievement of comparative studies between Gramsci and Machiavelli’s legacies. In his book *Hegemony & Power: On the Relation between Gramsci and Machiavelli* (1993), he presented both thinkers as sharing a common insight into the transformative nature of political knowledge, which is developed through the process of interplay between intellectuals and popular forces.

proliferates throughout society cultural and ideological belief system whose teachings are accepted as universally valid by the general population' (1993:140).

The most significant contribution of intellectuals in civil society, in Gramsci's sense, is the 'normalisation' of social order corresponding to the interest of hegemonic group. Intellectuals produce and promulgate specific information, knowledge or belief that normalises the existing social system containing irrational prejudice, inequality, and limitation. Enveloped in their own morality, these values or beliefs underpin the supremacy of a social group; after all, Gramsci (1971) argued that the privileged class believe they were entitled to inherit power in combining ethical values with economic interests, while the rest of the people have to admit their limitations to the access of power due to their moral inferiority.

Hegemony in the International Relations

Gramsci's analysis encompassed various levels of relations of force, and one of them was international relations, from which was derived the neo-Gramscian theory for IR, developed by some contemporary scholars such as Gill, Cox, and Rupert. Originally, Gramsci's concern in his analysis of hegemony was on the internal relations of a certain society or state, or more precisely, the relationship between civil society (the sphere of consent) and political society (the sphere of coercion) within a state.

However, as he developed hegemony as a strategy for expanding international socialism, he also bore in mind the potential of hegemony at the international level.⁹ He believed that

⁹ Among socialists in Gramsci's time, there was widespread recognition that each country must

changes in international power relations (world order) visible in military strategies and geopolitical positions mirror the fundamental changes in economic-structural relations. The more a nation is economically subordinate to international relations, the more likely a specific interest group or social force in the nation will stand in support to the foreign power, taking advantage of it in order to maintain the group's hegemonic power. In other words, this social force manifests to what extent the nation is economically subordinate and enslaved to hegemonic nations rather than to the integral element of its own nation (Gramsci, 1971:176). This social force does not necessarily have to pursue economic interests; rather, it tends to play the role of a cultural diplomat that disseminates a particular ideology or thought produced by the hegemonic state to – economically – subordinate countries, assimilating the former's interests into the latter's.

Gramsci categorised these institutions as the *intellectuals* on the international scale. Their function is to tie different countries together through producing and protecting global ideology, political theory, general rules of behaviour for states (for example, international human rights) as well as economics, which together constitute a coherent world-view favourable to the current dominant countries whilst incompatible with the interests of subordinate ones. By these activities, the hegemony of the nucleus of the world expands and

find its own way to socialism in conformity with its own original history and tradition. In the context of these movements, Gramsci argued that international relations must be taken into account when considering the relations of social forces within a country: 'To be sure, the line of development is towards internationalism, but the point of departure is "national" – and it is from this point of departure that one must begin. Yet the perspective is international and cannot be otherwise. Consequently, it is necessary to study accurately the combination of national forces which the international class (the proletariat) will have to lead and develop, in accordance with the international perspective and directive (i.e. those of the Comintern)' (Gramsci, 1971: 240).

penetrates into peripheral countries. Gramsci described this process as ‘passive revolution.’

We see that the perception of hegemony led Gramsci to define the state in a wider sense. As mentioned above, for Gramsci, the notion of the state is not externally expressed as ‘the government’ located above society, it is the basic entity in an articulated combination between political and civil societies. In the linkage between the two societies, social relations – including struggles – between groups in diverse levels take place. Gramsci conceived of a global society of the world as an enlarged notion of the integral state, which embodies institutions of ‘international civil society’ as well as ‘world political’ (military/administrative) system, where hegemonies can be built in international relations. For example, we can apply Gramsci’s theory to the hegemonic conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union in the twentieth century. Both countries were able to uphold their own supremacy over their allied nations on the foundation of their coherent international historic bloc, capitalism (or the pro-American alliance) and Comintern (or the ‘Third International’). On the contrary, whether to a greater or smaller extent, other countries in each bloc had restricted autonomy in international relations due to the impact of hegemonic power from the United States or the Soviet Union.

Summary

This chapter introduced Gramsci’s theory of hegemony. According to him, when a specific group’s solidarity transcended the limits of economic reason, bringing moral, political, and cultural unity, it could be called the moment of ‘hegemony.’ He also termed ‘historic bloc’ as

the complex circumstance in which hegemony is exercised by the dominant group. To establish historic bloc and hegemony, according to Gramsci, there are three essential conditions: a national-popular collective will, an active leadership and an organic cohesion between the classes.

Gramsci also deployed the term ‘common sense’ as a key element in his concept of hegemony. According to him, the ethical measure of a specific historic bloc is provided through the propagation of ‘common sense’, which entails a people’s worldview perceived in an unconscious and uncritical way. Using these concepts of theory of hegemony, what Gramsci ultimately argued is that the cultural sector (civil society) is organically linked with coercive measures (political society).

Applying Gramsci’s insight, this thesis investigates the policies carried out by Protestant Churches in North and South Korea and by the World Council of Churches (WCC) as institutions belonging to civil society, the sites where social forces can be founded by the relationship with specific political power (Chapter Four & Five). For the study, this thesis does not use neo-Gramscian theory but original Gramsci’s theory from his Prison Notebooks, since this thesis intensively focuses on cultural aspects, which were mostly neglected by neo-Gramscian theory.

With the Gramscian framework, this thesis will show that religion can be conceptualised as a vehicle of certain political ideology, and furthermore, certain policies of a religious institution, such as the church, not only seek to influence believers within the religious sphere, but also to

impact implicitly on the secular society encompassing politics, economy, and culture. In doing so, my thesis will reveal the way in which the religious sphere in civil society is interwoven with the political society, and the way in which the religious institution either exerts its power by associating itself with the hegemonic group or gains a new hegemony by acting counter to it.

In examining the hegemonic association or hegemonic competition, between the state and the religious institution as well as between the religious institutions, this thesis scrutinises the specific discourses produced and propagated by the states (the DPRK and the US) as well as religious institutions (the KCF, the WCC, and the NCKK) based on their own historic bloc. From this theoretical approach, we can see that not only the coercive role of the hegemonic state is considered, but also the interplay of consent and coercion is explored to underscore the interdependence of the religious institutions and the state.

Particularly, in the light of common sense, this thesis underlines the ideological orientation of nationwide culture, generally expressed as national rhetoric, that is, language. This is what Gramsci proposed for the analysis of social formations; he reiterated the importance of ‘language’¹⁰ as an analytical tool that enables the investigation into different conceptions and philosophies of the world:

It seems that one can say that ‘language’ is essentially a collective term which does

¹⁰ The original Italian word in the Prison Notebooks is *‘linguaggio’* (‘language in general’), ‘in the generic sense of the faculty to transmit messages, verbal or otherwise, by means of a common code’ (Gramsci, 1971: 34f)

not presuppose any single thing existing in time and space. Language also means culture and philosophy (if only at the level of common sense) and therefore the fact of ‘language’ is in reality a multiplicity of facts more or less organically coherent and coordinated (Gramsci, 1971: 349).

According to *Language and Hegemony in Gramsci* (2004), written by Peter Ives, Gramsci believed that language, which correlates with the role of intellectuals, culture and the unity of the national-popular, is intricately intertwined with the way people think and understand the world. For this reason, Gramsci drew a great deal of attention to language ranging from political discourse produced by governments, ethical-national rhetoric used by the Italian Catholic Church, to cultural language, and even daily linguistic practices (Gramsci, 1971).

Adopting Gramsci’s theoretical standpoint, this thesis compares ideologically different norms, morality, and knowledge created by different institutions, and then explores the way in which these ideational factors have been rooted in and impacted on people’s life in a political way; this is what we call ‘implicit cultural policy.’ With this theoretical framework as background, the next chapter will conceptualise the terms religion, culture and cultural policy.

Chapter 2. Conceptualising Religion, Culture and Cultural Policy in Gramscian Terms

Introduction

Chapter Two analyses the concept of culture, religion, and implicit cultural policy in Gramsci's terms. Religion was originally integrated into human lives both in the East and in the West. In other words, the power of religion in the pre-modern age reached not only the sphere of faith but also that of politics, economy, education, knowledge, health, art and even the daily lives of ordinary people. In this period, without distinction between the sacred and the secular, religion had functioned as an ethical code pursuing the best way of life. It was only since the eighteenth century that it began to be considered separately from other aspects of life as a discrete realm of experience, as a coherent entity, and as social conventions for phenomenological realities. In the West, through the structural transformation of society that differentiated between the social systems since the French Revolution followed by the Enlightenment rationalism, the religious sphere became independent with its own specialised system (W.C. Smith, 1959/1991; J.Z. Smith, 1967/1996). Following this, when western imperialism reached East Asia in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the modern concept of religion in the West also made an impact on the societies in the East.

The secular sphere gradually expanded since its separation from the sacred. This process was aligned with the capitalist mode of production in western society. On the basis of anti-

religiosity – or secularism – of capitalist society, it was reasonable to assume the decline of religious power. Many scholars, such as Bruce, predicted that religion would decline as it ceased to be the most important social system, becoming only one of various social systems emblematic of certain orientations toward agency (Bruce, 2006). However, there are competing studies that religion still maintains its influence on the people's daily lives in modern society, although it should be in principle separated from other secular spheres. For example, Luckmann (1967) claimed that religion in modern society had successfully characterised itself as institutional specialisation, having worldviews that had been standardised in well-defined doctrines, specialists who performed religious roles, and organisations that controlled doctrinal and ritual conformity and promoted organisational programmes. According to him, modern Christianity – both Catholicism and Protestantism¹¹ – was the one that developed as an official representative religion through the systemising process of institutional differentiation. A similar argument has been made by Vallier (1970), who has come to terms most adequately with the multidimensional aspects in the process of change in the Latin American Church. He stressed the necessity of considering multiple levels of thought, activity and organisation in any assessment of the significance of developments within Christianity and for society in general. These studies draw particular attention to political, ideological, and cultural functions of religion as the key to the flourishing of capitalist societies. In other words, they imply that we should focus on religion's social and cultural institutionalism rather than its sacred elements in order to see how religion remains in power in secular society.

¹¹ According to Oxford dictionary (2015), Protestantism in this thesis means 'the faith, practice, and Church order of the Protestant Churches.' Also, 'the Protestant Church' is defined as 'a particular Protestant organisation with its own clergies, buildings, and distinctive doctrines.'

Bearing this in mind, Chapter Two will attempt to conceptualise religious policy as a form of implicit cultural policy, and religious institutions as agents of implicit cultural policy with a systemised power in modern society. The first section of this chapter aims to introduce the concept of culture, cultural policy, and religion as political, cultural, and ideological resources. In order to do this, this thesis will use Gramsci's theory of hegemony as a theoretical framework explained in the previous chapter. This thesis will also introduce Gramsci's own analysis of religion focusing on the Roman Catholic Church in his day. Applying Gramsci's theory, I will conceptualise Protestant policies as implicit cultural policy in the end of this section.

Following the first section, the second section will investigate the way in which religious institutions can conduct implicit cultural policy in the contemporary world. Particularly, this section will focus on the strategies of religious institution towards secular society. This section will investigate the role religion plays as cultural institutions, focusing on its contribution to the hegemonic power of a certain group in Gramscian terms. The first and second sections of this chapter provide proper concepts for the subsequent analysis of Protestant policies conducted by the KCF, the WCC, and the NCKK, to be intensively discussed in the rest of the thesis.

Literature Reviews

Prior to conducting a full-scale analysis on the concept of religion within Gramsci's framework, this chapter reviews several approaches towards understanding religion. There is

a huge amount of literature on the concepts of religion, culture and the cultural policy, but it is impossible to treat all of them in the thesis due to the word limits. For the efficient conduct of research, the focus of literature review in this chapter is narrowly on the concepts of religion as a cultural resource, which are related to the perspective of this research project.

With Voltaire's announcement of an 'Age of Enlightenment' in the eighteenth century, there has been a statutory distinction between the religious and non-religious (secular) spheres in western society. This distinction gave rise to the preconception that religious and non-religious spheres are inviolable territories to one another, and the academic field is not free from this separation either. Apart from philosophy and literature, which are influenced by religion metaphysically, and cultural anthropology, which looks at folk beliefs, only a few scholars of the sociology of religion, such as Marx, Gramsci, and their academic inheritors after their death, have exceptionally dealt with religion as one element of the social structure organically connected with other secular sectors such as politics, economy or international relations.

The most valid assumption about the widespread ignorance on the influence of religion in the social sciences is the origin of social science itself. In fact, from the beginning, sociology was founded upon research initiatives on the decline of religion. The influential founders of sociology in the nineteenth century, including Weber, Durkheim and Comte, concluded that the force of religion was waning in modern society, and could eventually disappear and be replaced by scientific rationalism. In a broader sense, the social sciences, particularly sociology, had departed from religion on the basis of secularism. Early sociologists' assertion

that modernisation would result in the decline of religion was proclaimed again by the social sciences of the twentieth century.

By the 1950s, as the functionalist perspective became the predominant sociological view, most political scientists claimed that the significance of ethnicity and religion would be reduced in politics by modernisation (Norris and Inglehart, 2004). This tendency continued to be influential in the twenty-first century. Steve Bruce further elaborates the theory of secularism with an analysis of modern phenomena that eroded religious power, namely, social differentiation, expansion of society which led to 'anonymous urban agglomerations', individualism, egalitarianism, and rationalisation of social organisation (2006:13). He argued that all these phenomena created cultural pluralism which challenged the moral authority of religious institutions.

However, there was another view on the influence of religion on society. Providing strong empirical evidence, they argue that religion is still influential on the people's daily lives but in a different way from the pre-modern period. First of all, they critically considered the assumption of defining of religion universally accepted. Although there have been an overwhelming variety of definitions for religion in the twentieth century, no single one of them has been widely accepted and the term remains difficult to define. In the academic pursuit of universally applicable conceptualisation of religion, Wilfred Smith (1959/1991) proposed some considerations that problematised a universal concept of religion despite other academic approaches, combining the study of religion with other fields that have intellectually and pragmatically modified human lives, such as psychology, sociology and

history. First, a multiplicity of religious traditions must be considered. Contemporary secularism holds that any acceptable interpretation of a specific faith must make room for the other equal faith. Second, a change of religious perspective should be noted. Like other aspects of human life, the religious aspect too has evolved and changed historically. Third, there is the question of the ‘vitality’ of faith: Religious feeling remains present and pressing despite assailment by Enlightenment rationalism, competitions in multi-religious societies, and most of all, doubt and uncertainty.

Meanwhile, two predominant approaches to the definition of religion, categorised by Russell McCutcheon (1997), have been widely referred to over the past decades: substantive and functional. The substantive approach, generally assumed by historians of religion such as Mircea Eliade and Rudolf Otto, defined religion based on *what it is*. Religion was seen by this approach as phenomenological activities and believed contents referring to transcendent entities in the conventional sense, such as God, gods, supernatural being and worlds, or meta-empirical entities like the law of karma of Hinduism. On the other hand, the functional approach sought to define religion based on *what it does*. In this view, religion was interpreted in terms of its social or psychological functions.

Karl Marx can be seen as one of the first theorists to have focused on the negative function of religion in society. Stating that ‘the criticism of religion is the premise of all criticism’, he treated religion as one of the most important phenomena to be analysed for the basis of critical social theory (Marx, 1875/1964:53). According to him, religion – especially, Christianity – played certain roles in modern capitalist society in the West. However,

mainline religion (that is, Christianity) did not fundamentally resolve the oppressive social relations in the capitalist system but rather obscured them, which ended up weakening peoples' drive for struggling against economic inequality. He also pointed out that people could not recognise religion as a product of their cultural consciousness due to their ideological cognition for the interpretation of religion. For this reason, he argued that religion should be banished from society in the end as it could be seen as a form or symptom of alienation (Marx, 1875/1964; Easton and Guddat, 1967).

In contrast to Marx's negative interpretation of religion, Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930/2001) showed that there was a significant contribution made by Protestantism to the successful formation of the socio-economic system in European capitalist societies. Weber's claim was that religion produced an ideological atmosphere in which capitalism could and did benefit in producing prosperity, but he cautiously commented that Protestantism did not act as a prime determinant. Although Weber's study on religion exactly reversed the order of Marx', we can say that the former shared a similar functionalist approach with the latter, as Weber stated that 'the external courses of religious behaviour are so diverse that an understanding of this behaviour can only be achieved from the viewpoint of the subjective experience, ideas, and purpose of the individual concern – in short, from the viewpoint of the religious behaviour's "meaning"' (Weber, 1922/1978:399).

Alongside Marx and Weber, Emile Durkheim also employed the functional approach to study of religion. Similar to Marx, Durkheim regarded religion as a product of the imagination (1915/2008). However, whereas Marx recognised religion as an obstacle to people's

emancipation from the oppressive structure of society, Durkheim considered religion as an essential element in order to construct societies, functioning as an imaginary origin of collective identity. In *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* (1915/2008), he underlined the fact that the origin of religion was not an individual but collective phenomenon; it was the product of social life stemming from collective conscience – in other words, beliefs and sentiments commonly shared by people within a society:

(...) religion is something eminently social. Religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities; the rites are a manner of acting which take rise in the midst of assembled groups and which are destined to excite, maintain, or recreate certain mental states in these groups (Durkheim, 1915/2008:10)

In this work, Durkheim focused on the morals and norms, provided by religion for reaffirming people's solidarity and identification within a society. According to him, people who felt a sense of solidarity by specific social elements in a society became conscious of a moral unity. Such moral unity would develop into a collective representation, and ultimately, formed a *collective conscience*, which Durkheim termed *religion*. Following Durkheim, Bellah, another functionalist theorist, defined religion as 'a set of symbolic forms and acts which relate man to the ultimate condition of his existence', including such complex meanings as nationalism, revolutionary faith, the mobility ethos, or any number of new life styles with their appropriate cognitive and normative legitimation (Bellah, 1964:358). However, both Durkheim and Bellah did not mention in their respective studies to what extent religion was related to social conflicts, authorities, or power.

Some famous scholars such as Bianchi (1975), W.C. Smith (1959/1991) and Beyer (2003) sceptically discussed that sociological distinctions between substantive and functional – or between more inclusive and more restrictive – approaches did not reach the core of the important problem behind religions. Their common critique was that the existing definitions of religion were not transcendently recognised but emerged at the specific moment within Judeo-Christian background. W.C. Smith (1959/1991) argued that the word *religion* itself had been abused as a standard for Judeo-Christian monotheism, which etymologically derived from the Latin *religio* designating ‘power outside man obligating him to certain behaviour under pain of threatened awesome retribution, a kind of taboo, or the feeling in man vis-à-vis such powers’ (Smith, 1959/1991:20-21). According to her, with the expansion of Christianity, the term religion became subsumed under the meaning of regulation, ritual method, or disciplines for belief in Christian communities. That is, Christianity brought about the dichotomous view of distinguishing the notion of *religio* and *anti-religio*: God/mankind (or creation), holy/unholy, sacred/secular, soul/body, and furthermore, this dichotomous pattern also made their communities (in and around churches) exclusively separate from the ‘other’ world (outside churches). Based on this dichotomy, western monotheistic tradition and culture originating in Judeo-Christianity have been indelibly imprinted on the concept of religion in modern western society, as the ideal form of religion or at least, a kind of principle or standard for identifying authentic religion (Bianchi, 1975; Beyer, 2003).

On the other hand, Waadenburg (1973) and McGrane (1989) pointed out that the worldview of western Enlightenment in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries was a crucial

influence on the concept of religion. In an Enlightenment sense, rationalism not only conceptualised the religions as the various systems of what people believed but arranged religions in a hierarchy contingent on their achievement of coherence in doctrines, practices, rules and regulations (McGrane, 1989). In this process, new ways of looking at the world, new attitude to churches, new conceptions of truth in this period of European history caused their religious realm to be intellectualised. As a consequence, in spite of receding to only one religion among many rather than the only truth, Christianity could reinforce its status as one of the most rationally and intellectually advanced religions in the world. In this sense, the concept of religion itself can be interpreted as part of a European value system (Waadenburg, 1973).

Criticism of Christian-centred worldview in the concept of religion has been discussed extensively by the empirical researches. Particularly, these researches have been linked to its ideological and political implications, as it played important roles in the context of western imperial expansion, and was used as a tool of cultural colonialism and control. According to Chidester (1996), who attempted to link modern concepts of religion to western political strategies of domination with the example of colonial history in South Africa, the concept of religion contributed to western imperialism since the Christian-centred concept represented itself as an objective measure to judge other religions belonging to different parts of world. During process of conquest, European imperialists used Christian-oriented sense of religion to disparage local people as irreligious, superstitious, irrational, and therefore, uncivilised. At the same time, the invocation of Christian morality obfuscated the true economic realities of colonialism in favour of a gentle rhetoric of paternalism and optimism (Chidester, 1996).

However, some functionalists' studies have moved away from the Christian-oriented notion of religion. They illustrated religion as one element in a system of culture rather than something *sui generis*, emphasising the way in which religion has influences beyond the religious sphere. Particularly, their approach focused on the cultural connections between religion and politics, which could be understood as a combination of individual values and opinions. For example, Geertz extended the definition of religion to an anthropological context: 'a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic' (Geertz, 1966:4). In other words, religion has existed as a cultural system that justified the implicit link between the sacred and the secular orders.

A similar perspective can be found in Bruce Lincoln's work. In *Discourse and the Construction of Society: Comparative Studies of Myth, Ritual, and Classification* (1989), he contended that religion should be analysed as a set of rhetorical strategies employed by societies. Lincoln's argument challenged the assumption of cultural essentialism pervasive within religious societies; that is, based on the conception of human beings as 'cultural' subjects, those who share the same religious identity distinguish themselves from other believers, as if they were identified by discrete cultural values, narratives, symbols, and practices. The most significant problem inherent in cultural essentialism according to Lincoln emerges when a certain religious tradition became conflated with the cultural values implicitly represented by the vested interest group, since this would justify the group's

privilege against competing identities, narratives and cultural values by ideologically manipulating a society. However, it would be difficult to recognise this ideological operation in such a society, because people's consciousness was itself a product of that society.

In many respects, Lincoln contributed to the Gramscian concept of religion by seeking to combine Durkheim's and Marx's traditions. First, he supposed religion as a cultural product in the process of social formation in Marxist terms. Second, he paid attention to the issue of power conflicts and the ideological operation in religious rhetoric, an area overlooked in Durkheim's work. Third, he suggested that religious claims should be considered in ideological contexts, rather than in the spiritual-transcendental sense, in order to reveal its hidden function within secular society. In this sense, he viewed religion as a cultural issue within the context of hegemonic struggles. However, Waggoner (2011) criticised that Lincoln's work for having a tendency to stress the ideological role of culture in favour of the ruling group through the transcendental argument, which ended up authorising the ruler's status while disapproving others'. In other words, Lincoln failed to recognise the fact that challenges to authority, power, and privilege were also constituents of a hegemonic struggle highlighted by Gramsci.

Chapter 2.1. Gramsci's Perspective on Culture, Cultural Policy, and Religion

This section aims to conceptualise the terms culture, cultural policy, and religion in Gramscian terms. Compared to Gramsci's theory on politics, his thoughts on culture, cultural policy and religion have received relatively little attention by scholars. However, we can see his analysis of those concepts, which were intricately interwoven with one another, scattered throughout his book.

The Concept of Culture

In his *Special Notebooks*¹², Gramsci provided a full definition of culture in 'Literary Criticism'. He defined culture as 'a coherent, integral and nationwide "conception of life and man", a "lay religion", a philosophy', which was capable of generating 'an ethic, a life-style, and an individual and civil pattern of behaviour' (Gramsci, 1985: 2185-2186). 'Lay religion', is taken here as 'a lay culture, (...) a modern "humanism" able to reach right to the simplest and most uneducated classes' (Gramsci, 1985:2119).

What is interesting in Gramsci's definition of culture is the fade-out of class consciousness while highlighting the national aspect: to understand culture, he submitted, it was necessary to have 'a new attitude towards the popular classes and a new concept of what is "national", [which is] different from that of the Right, broader, less exclusive and, so to speak, less "police-like"' (Gramsci, 1985:2186). Unlike other Marxists, who typically paid attention on

¹² Apart from *Prison Notebooks*, the term 'Special Notebook' refers to Gramsci's thematic notebooks, in which he systematically elaborated his theory in second draft of the notes he had previously written since 1932.

the proletariat as the chosen class who would lead the revolution on behalf of the whole popular mass, Gramsci no longer referred specifically to the 'proletariat' culture.

Another observation can be made on Gramsci's emphasis on the function of culture. He distinguished folklore or popular culture from the nationwide culture, where the former indicated a 'confused agglomerate' of local-provincial values that was fragmented and incoherent, while the latter was 'politically organised' through systemic elaboration (Gramsci, 1985:2312). Only culture shared at a national level, regardless of people's classes, could generate 'an ethic, a life-style, an individual and civil pattern of behaviour' that would eventually facilitate the political mobilisation of the mass, with the potential of becoming hegemonic power.

With this approach, we can see an important point in Gramsci's notion of culture. That is, once a certain culture is developed as the nationwide culture, the culture does not purely belong to civil society any more, but it stands between civil and political spheres because only political intervention enables the culture to become valid nationwide. In this case, the nationwide culture functions for the *integral* state, as a medium of connection between civil and political societies.

The Concept of Cultural Policy

According to Gramsci, who studied the condition of the outbreak of socialist revolution, the development of a new culture at a national level, which contained new ethical standards and new conception of the world was one of the essential elements in the process. However, Gramsci did not think that new culture could be created on its own. Rather, it could be

formed in a hegemonic struggle:

One must speak of a new culture, that is, for a new moral life that cannot but be intimately connected to a new institution of life, until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality (Gramsci, 1985:2192).

Such a struggle, Gramsci argued, aimed to gain consensus on a certain cultural value by enabling communication between different social strata. In doing so, the value of culture could be elevated to the 'national popular,' that is, the yardstick of civilised and ethical behaviours at the national level (Gramsci, 1985:2194). When the value was successfully conveyed to 'the sphere of the complex superstructures' through the struggle (Gramsci, 1971:1584), it reached a purely political level in which individual interests 'transcend the corporate limits of the purely economic class, and can and must become the interests of other subordinate group, too' (Gramsci, 1971:1584).

Gramsci elaborated on certain elements essential to the undertaking of this struggle. The first element was that of a fundamental social group necessary to create a new cultural value. According to Gramsci, this sort of culture could be developed by fundamental social groups in which members shared specific common specific identities, such as in religion, race, economic class or political orientation. Based on their common identity, these fundamental social groups, Gramsci argued, could create a certain value of culture with a certain worldview.

The second element was organic intellectuals that would conduct relations between different groups. Gramsci argued that fundamental social groups could formulate a certain cultural value at the national level only together with the activities of organic intellectuals, who could establish relations between two different groups in one society. With the help of organic intellectuals, the struggle could express ‘the degree of homogeneity, self-awareness, and organisation attained by the various social classes’ (Gramsci, 1971:1583).

The final element was an institutional system for diffusing values. The cultural organisations and institutions enabled fundamental groups and organic intellectuals to refine their tactics and long-term strategies for spreading the cultural-ethical value concerned. In *The Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci described these cultural-intellectual institutions and organisations as ‘hegemonic apparatus (mechanism)’ of the hegemonic group (Gramsci, 1971:216, 264). Since a certain degree of hegemony might have been established before the acquisition of state power, Gramsci claimed that it is important to examine the ways in which these ‘material organisations’ functioned with the aim to ‘maintain, defend and develop the theoretical and ideological “front”’ (Gramsci, 1995:155).

Synthetically, [hegemonic] cultural policy can be conceptualised from the Gramscian perspective as follows: activities for creating and diffusing cultural values on the basis of social relations between different social strata, conducted by cultural organisations or institutions accommodating social fundamental groups and organic intellectuals.

Explicit and Implicit Cultural Policies in Gramsci's Concept

I should note that the term 'cultural policy' used here refers to Gramsci's '*politica culturale*' in his writings. There are two possible translations for this term in English: 'politics of culture' or 'cultural policy'. While Forgacs and Geoffrey, in *Selections from Cultural Writings* (1985), opted for the former, Hoare and Smith, in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* by (1971), opted for the latter. This confusion arose from the fact in Italian, '*politica*' means both 'politics' and 'policy'.

In fact, this term mirrored Gramsci's views on the complexly interwoven relations between civil and political societies. The notion of '*politica culturale*' precisely emphasises Gramsci's idea that hegemonic or nationwide culture ultimately sought after the 'integral' state rather than restricting itself within civil society. In other words, when a certain culture is promoted by the government, it cannot but be political. In this regard, we can see that Gramsci restricted the scope of cultural policy or politics of culture to government action. This understanding of cultural policy can be in tune with the modern definition of cultural policy in cultural policy studies in academia, such as, Ahearne's notion that explicit cultural policy is 'any cultural policy that a government labels as such' (Ahearne, 2009:143).

On the other hand, Gramsci's conception of social fundamental groups (including organic intellectuals) implied that cultural policy should be understood more broadly than governmental activities. As mentioned above, such fundamental groups were not necessarily composed of government officers or politicians, but could be formed by civilians based on a common cultural identity such as religion, ethnicity, arts, or academics. If they organised their own institutional system and propagate their own cultural values, it would not be conceived

as governmental activity. In this sense, this concept corresponds to the idea of implicit cultural policy: ‘any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides’ (Ahearne, 2009:143), which can be found ‘not only at governments and multinational entertainment corporation[s], but also at a very much more diverse set of agents and agencies, all of which can be seen to be in the business of cultural propagation’ (Bennett, 2009: 157).

With respect to the theory of a clandestine relationship between culture, politics, and economy, Gramsci’s analysis can be seen as a pioneering theorisation of ‘implicit cultural policy’, although it was not so labelled. In fact, it is not a new approach to analyse the concept of culture and cultural policy through Gramsci’s perspective. For example, Miller and Yúdice (2002) have already related Gramsci’s civil society theory to the sphere of cultural policy. In many aspects, Gramsci’s notion of hegemony has a connection with the concept of cultural policy that bestows an extended meaning of power on culture with its instrumental value. From the Gramscian perspective, as its purpose is to draw people into a unified relation, the hegemonic power of culture is in line with concept of policy which assumes the suitability for political rationalities of agencies aiming to achieve social integration.

Although the term ‘cultural policy’ has a relatively short history compared to ‘culture’¹³,

¹³ Ahearne cited Philippe Urfalino’s view that such policies were originally designed by the French government in 1959, with the foundation of the Ministry for Cultural Affairs (Ahearne, 2009). However, Gramsci had already used this term as a political strategy in the cultural sphere in *Prison Notebooks*.

which has been around since the eighteenth century, the former has already acquired a number of different meanings alongside the latter. Unlike in the past when discussions on cultural policy focused on administrative acts for the arts at governmental level, recent developments in the field of cultural policy have led to a gradual extension of its definition from a governmental activity to other implicit constitutional activities. Indeed, the term ‘cultural policy’ has become a sector of enormous complexity, beyond the boundaries of artistic activities. For example, Mark Schuster (2003), an American scholar of urban cultural policy studies, has come up with four important premises related to the generally applicable features of state cultural policies in his book *Mapping State Cultural Policy: The State of Washington*:

- i) Many more agencies than those that are commonly understood to be the ‘cultural agencies’ are involved in cultural policy (such as the Department of Natural Resources, Agriculture, or Transportation).
- ii) In such a policy context, it is not common to think of the aggregation of these agencies, institutions, actions, and policies as constituting a conceptual whole. That is, it makes policy difficult to articulate and makes it difficult for policy agencies to move in the same direction.
- iii) Much of state cultural policy is implicit rather than explicit, being the result of actions and decisions taken without expressed policy intention.
- iv) Much of state cultural policy is indirect rather than direct, being the result of a wide variety of interventions beyond the operation of direct financial support (Schuster, 2003:8-9)

As such, cultural policy is already engaged in the way that cultural attributes are comprised as target of particular knowledge, information, and administration (Gramsci's political society or coercive power) through particular agencies – in civil society – and their practice. We can infer from Schuster's statements two key concepts in cultural policy. On the one hand, cultural policy is not necessarily framed only within the cultural sector. It can have influence beyond the cultural sphere and also be influenced by other spheres. Also, not only cultural agencies but also other governmental sectors can operate, or at least, get involved in cultural policy. On the other hand, when a certain cultural policy is established, there may be hidden or indirect effects not deliberately intended by the policymaker but which nonetheless become manifested.

Whilst Schuster delimited his premises by solely predicating upon cultural policies through the state, Ahearne (2009) and Bennett (2009) challenged conventional understanding of cultural policy by developing the concept of 'implicit cultural policy' with a wider application to various implicit constitutional activities such as politics, economics, media, religion, and so on. Ahearne (2009) claimed that political actions on culture should be considered in broader scope, including autonomous sectors. Thus, he proposed a distinction between two broad categories of cultural policy: explicit (nominal) cultural policy and implicit (effective) cultural policy. According to him, *implicit* cultural policy includes 'any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides', whereas *explicit* cultural policy is defined as 'any cultural policy that a government explicit[ly] labels as cultural' (Ahearne, 2009:143), as mentioned above.

Following Ahearne, Bennett (2009) attempted to amplify the concept of implicit cultural policy by applying the term to wider sectors and organisations. He argued that we can find broader range of agents and agencies of cultural policy if ‘the deliberate intention to work on the culture of people’ can be seen as ‘the defining characteristic of cultural policy’ (Bennett, 2009:157). These can include individuals, such as public intellectuals and cultural critics, and all those organisations, ranging from the religious to the criminal (think of the mafia, for example), that set out to promote a particular set of cultural values or practice (Bennett, 2009:157).

Likewise, in the concept of implicit cultural policy, the notion of cultural policy is not limited to a governmental body and its umbrella organisations, but extended to the activities of other institutions in the private sectors. From the perspective of implicit cultural policy, diverse agencies in modern society are engaged in ‘culture’ to be administrated and distributed from schools, universities, and broadcasting companies to even ordinary and informal practice at home, which is equivalent to ‘civil society’ in Gramsci’s terms. Furthermore, given that its main focus is on the overlooked political action on culture in a certain policy, implicit cultural policy studies carries the assumption that there is an indirect or hidden relationship between culture and politics. We see the exact same argument from Gramsci, where civil (cultural and non-governmental sectors) and political societies (coercive administration) are organically linked to each other. As a matter of fact, those that have developed the idea of implicit cultural policy have, like Gramsci, seen the notion of the state as ‘a set of relations’:

[...] In this view, a state is not a visible object, but *a set of relations* [emphasis added], and unless these relations are maintained (the role of culture), then the state will break down (Bennett, 2009:157).

Both implicit cultural policy theory and Gramsci's theory of hegemony assume that the educative aspect of culture constitutes implicit political power on the foundation of the specific social formation, which is hegemonic. According to Tony Bennett (1989), the semantic implication of 'culture' implying a normative standard is the most distinctive result of the social transformation that happened in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Europe. Since then, culture has been figured as both the object and instrument of the government as instilling morals, manners, and ways of life into affiliated people. This culture, in terms of an array of political interests and organising practices, cannot totally remain impartial but must reflect the agencies' concern with inculcating those specific aspects of morality. These principles are apparently basic attributes of modern democratic citizenship, but relative values are submerged in relation to the stability of regimes. This is what Gramsci addressed with the educative function of the state on cultural and moral levels. Otherwise, to put it differently, certain principles of civil society adopted by the state emerge as an *ethical educator* [emphasis added]. Through this education, public opinion is manufactured in the existing economic condition. Gramsci called this the 'ethical state':

The most reasonable and concrete thing that can be said about the ethical State,¹⁴ the

¹⁴ It is assumed that the notion of the ethical state is derived from the 'organic laws' termed by Marx: 'It is impossible to create a moral power by paragraphs of law. There must also be *organic*

cultural State, is this: every State is ethical in as much as one of its most important functions is to raise the great mass of the population to a particular cultural and moral level, a level (or type) which corresponds to the needs of the productive forces for development, and hence to the interests of the ruling classes (Gramsci, 1971:258).

To stabilise the social structure and preserve the hegemonic power of the fundamental group, he highlighted not only the function of schools (a positive educative function) and the legal system (a repressive and negative educative function) but also the educational role of private institutions and activities such as the church, media, and even family. The state derived various kinds of social antagonism as well as multiple fronts of politics from its ethical function. Gramsci called this strategy ‘a war of position.’ As the opposite strategy to ‘war of manoeuvre/movement’, whose aim is to subvert the whole state by means of physical, particularly military force, a ‘war of position’ is a strategy conducted in a more defensive way, seeking to build up a broad bloc based on the solidarity of varied social forces alongside shared antagonism in civil society. He further described the comparison between the two wars through an analogy to military strategy:

In war it would sometimes happen that a fierce artillery attack (i.e. the war of manoeuvre/movement) seemed to have destroyed the enemy’s entire defensive system, whereas in fact it had only destroyed the outer perimeter; and at the moment of their advance and attack the assailants would find themselves confronted by a line of defence which was still effective (i.e., the war of position). (Gramsci, 1971:235)

laws supplementing the Constitution’ (quoted in Miller & Yúdice, 2002:7, italics original). Miller and Yúdice regarded these organic laws as cultural policy.

Understanding Gramsci's idea would lead us to see implicit cultural policy as a sort of power strategy, that is, 'the war of position', anonymously engaged in culture and in its underpinned historic bloc. It does not represent directly the social values in specialised locales through intensive regulation or management, but it still entails what 'the policy-maker believes to be prevailing cultural norms' (Throsby, 2009:180); in this case, such policies are utilised aiming to reinforce a specific hegemonic viewpoint of the cultural status quo.

Additionally, as discussed above, ethical measure is transmitted through propagating Gramsci's 'common sense' into culture, 'the actual, grounded terrain of practice, representations, language and customs of any specific historical society' (Hall, 1986:26). Considering its fundamental role in shaping popular life, transforming everyday consciousness or popular thought of the masses, 'common sense' can be equated with Ahearne's prescription of cultural attitudes or habit, which is the main purpose of implicit cultural policy (2009). In combination with common sense, culture can then symbolise systems and promote normative attitudes in societies, although it is inevitable that culture still implicitly represents the interest of the hegemonic group. Gramsci argued that the best condition for the development of a *collective will* is when the common sense – represented as specific values, beliefs, behaviours, taste and sentiments – can be inculcated in culture with national resources transcending class interests.

In this sense, the idea of implicit cultural policy can further clarify in what ways these popular thoughts – common sense – are constructed by investigating the basis of the specific

historical experience in the corresponding historic blocs. Furthermore, it also requires extensive research on intellectual organisations that create an organic linkage between culture and hegemonic power in a normative way, which is an essential element for building consensus among the hegemonic and other groups. Gramsci argued that how the society is institutionally arranged is reflective of its people's desire, values and actions. This is why his notion of hegemony is bound together with definitions of the state and civil society.

The Concept of Religion

Actually, Gramsci took notice of various kinds of cultural organisations and institutions, as agents of cultural policy, to which cultural autonomy was granted, such as schools, universities, and churches:

The school, at all levels, and the *Church* [emphasis added], are the biggest cultural organisations in every country, in terms of the number of people they employ. Then there are newspapers, magazines and the book trade and private educational institutions, either those which are complementary to the state system, or cultural institutions like the popular universities (Gramsci, 1971:342).

Because their activities significantly influenced the relations of social force, Gramsci argued that any analysis of the activities of cultural institutions belonging to civil society should extend to their engagement in the political society. In particular, what Gramsci indicated throughout *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) was that religion inspired him to improve the necessary knowledge for the realisation of socialism in a strategic way. In spite of his

identification with Karl Marx, who sought to transform the conditions of humankind in an earthly sense, Gramsci also had a great insight into the fact that religious belief contained commitments and strong convictions more than political ideologies or philosophies.

Most of Gramsci's analysis on religion focused on the Roman Catholic Church, the national religion of his homeland Italy, but he also discussed various cases of hegemonic formation within different religions of different countries such as Buddhism in India and China, Protestantism in other European societies and liberal theology in Latin America. Through this, he showed that his analysis of Roman Catholicism in his theory of hegemony is applicable to other religions (Gramsci, 1971:148-161).

Even before the arrival of the first generation of sociologists which included Weber and Durkheim reviewed above, Gramsci was already aware of the potential of religion. Gramsci's concept of religion was grounded on socio-historical interpretation, was formed by his concrete analysis of various events such as power struggles in the past and his time, as well as the development of cultures and power alliances. Gramsci highly esteemed the adaptive capacity of religion for capitalism, which still operated within social relations of production.

From Gramsci's perspective, religion was the only primordial institution that has endured and transcended changes in the sovereign system from monarchism to democracy. Gramsci observed that religion in a capitalist society still exerted its political power over the public even after its expulsion to the private sphere and the change in its role in social communities. The flexibility that the Roman Catholic Church has demonstrated in modern society proved

that the transformation of social systems would prompt a transformation in religion, so that religion could still remain as the dominant system (Maduro, 1977).

Gramsci's assumption was that individual initiatives were not completely spontaneous, but formed under the influence of collective discipline provided by academic or cultural institutions. Together with the educational institutions such as the elementary school or the university, religion – or more precisely, Roman Catholic Church – was one of the very two pillars of cultural organisation underpinning the ideological world. Particularly, there were two remarkable features of religion that Gramsci admired: its being a historically established organisation and its long-lasting hegemony in Europe. In respect of organisational stability and hegemony based on concrete philosophical thought, the Church's organic quality seemed even stronger than the university's.

In Gramsci's view, religion has held its superior position over the community – for example, the Roman Catholic Church for the Italian people – by achieving a hegemonic culture at both individual and collective levels. This culture would be continuously developed to seek to maintain its power in a specific political system, and only intellectual and moral reformation of consciousness through educational and political means would facilitate it. He believed that religion's function as a total praxis, or as a form of power, was what was worth learning for the strategic socialist moral reformation.

Some of Gramsci's concepts in *The Prison Notebooks* (1971) introduced in the previous chapter, embody his reflection on the functions of religion, such as hegemony, coercion,

historic bloc, intellectual and moral reformation. This thesis will unravel the power relations between religions and social structures by using terms defined by Gramsci.

- i) The Organic Linkage between Religion of Intellectuals (Official Religion) and Religion of People (Popular Religion)

Gramsci argued that the characteristics of religion differed according to the groups diversified by jobs, languages and other cultural specificities.

Every religion, even the Catholic (in fact, especially the Catholic, precisely because of its efforts to remain united superficially, and not to split up into national churches and into various social strata) is in reality a multiplicity of distinct and often contradictory religions: there is a Catholicism of the petit bourgeoisie and city workers, a women's Catholicism, and intellectual's Catholicism equally varied and disconnected (Gramsci, 1971:419-20).

In other words, even though people view the same object, each person had their own active conception of culture expressed, in accordance with their political, economic, and social status; and religion was one of them. Gramsci broadly distinguished people's concepts of religion according to the power structure: the ruling group belonging to a religion of intellectuals or official religion, while the ruled to a popular religion or religion of the people.

Popular religion referred to the beliefs, morals and practices that occurred naturally and spontaneously, examples including myths, anti-rational faiths, superstitions, or even 'this-worldly' religious attitudes emphasised with concerns for salvation and well-being. Popular

religion reflected the unstructured and often-contradictory elements of religion, which were close to the experiences in people's daily life held by non-privileged social and economic groups, distinguished as the subaltern in Gramsci's terms.

On the contrary, religion of intellectuals meant official religion in its organisational mode with its clerical and lay functionaries. Gramsci's concept of *intellectuals* here depended on the extent to which they were engaged in the complex relationship between social classes, rather than on the distinctiveness of labour type. In particular, he came up with the term 'organic intellectuals' to refer to those who construct, develop or unify hegemonic values between dominant and subordinate groups, which were organically connected to the operation of the mode of production. The crucial point to note here is that the organic intellectuals Gramsci referred to actually came from the ecclesiastics of the Roman Catholic Church, who belonged to the privileged enjoying actual power in Italy during his time. He saw Catholic clerical activities, building bridges between the clergy and the laity, as the best example of organic intellectual activities.

The most typical of these categories of intellectuals is that of the ecclesiastics, who for a long time held a monopoly of a number of important services: religious ideology, that is the philosophy and science of the age, together with schools, education, morality, justice, charity, good works etc. The category of ecclesiastics can be considered the category of intellectuals organically bound to the land aristocracy. It had equal status judicially with the aristocracy, with which it shared the exercise of feudal ownership of land, and the use of state privileges connected with property

(Gramsci, 1971:7).

Gramsci contended that the elaboration performed by these religious intellectuals was directly connected with their social control. These organic intellectuals were established by every 'fundamental' social group based on their economic privileges, and seemingly represented 'an historical continuity uninterrupted even by the most complicated and radical changes in political and social reform' (Gramsci, 1971:6). With their efforts, official religion was exteriorised in the elaborated form of theology and dogma as well as in an effective system as a source of political power.

Furthermore, it was these organic intellectuals who contributed to the development of an integrated system of interpretation and organisation between the ruling and ruled groups. Gramsci illustrated as an example their roles in the social integration with the catechism of the Catholic Church, which aimed to maintain hegemony through inculcating religious concepts into the masses. He believed that the hegemonic value adopted by the people and reflected in their thoughts and behaviour was fundamentally created in this process of integration. For this reason, Gramsci regarded religious intellectuals as implicit functionaries on behalf of the dominant class capable of social integration between classes. They belonged to the ruling alliance within an existing historic bloc, such as civil servants, politicians, teachers, and judges.

The strength of religions, and of the Catholic Church in particular, has lain, and still lies, in the fact that they feel very strongly the need for the doctrinal unity of the

whole mass of the faithful and strive to ensure that the higher intellectual stratum does not separated from the lower. The Roman church has always been the most vigorous in the struggle to prevent the ‘official’ formation of two religions, on for the ‘intellectual’ and the other for the ‘simple souls’ (Gramsci, 1971:328).

Why did official religion – the religion of intellectuals – cling to the unified bloc between higher intellectuals and the common people? In Gramsci’s view, popular religion had the potential to become both progressive and conservative, and in the latter case, it could consistently reproduce the privileged groups’ hegemony in association with the official religion, and furthermore, the state. As mentioned above, popular religion comprised a multitude of unorganised elements often in contradiction.

On the one hand, popular religion would be obedient to the systemised religion of intellectuals, as they shared with each other certain remnants of the historical values handed down from the pre-capitalist world. On the other hand, a popular religion also operated at its own level of morality and truth formed based on an inconsistent interpretation of people’s own cultural experiences, which could be different and even in opposition to the values of official religion, even though it was not always conscious or explicit. If this aspect was developed as an ideology of the lower class, and furthermore, as a revolutionary power, it would result in the official religion’s loss of hegemony since the historic bloc was dissolved. For this reason, the official religion of the intellectuals consistently attempted to impede the formation of two separate strata in religion, while, as Gramsci argued, some revolutionary elements in popular religion could lead to a rebellion against the established authority by

building up a collective consciousness within the popular masses.

ii) Common Sense and Popular Religion

As discussed in the previous chapter, common sense was used for propagating an ethical measure of a specific historic bloc. According to Gramsci, popular religion was operative at the level of common sense.

Its [common sense's] fundamental and most characteristic feature is that it is a conception which is fragmentary, incoherent, inconsistent, conforming to the social and cultural position of the people whose philosophy it is [...] Into the common sense flow not only the rougher and less elaborate forms of today's existing Catholicism; but preceding religions and preceding forms of what is actually now Catholicism, the popular heretical movements and the scientific superstitions tied to past religions and so on, have also flowed [into it] and are [now] components. In the common sense predominate the 'realistic', materialistic elements, that is the immediate products of raw sensation. Something which, besides, is not contradiction with the religious element, on the contrary; but these elements are 'superstitious,' a-critical (Gramsci, 1971:419-420).

That is to say, popular religion emerged into society only on the basis of common sense indicating commonality in common consciousness or in experience. Popular religion and common sense shared the same strengths and weaknesses. Both could have the social force, and at the same time, they did not have integrated or systemised forms.

Religion and the common sense cannot constitute an intellectual order because they cannot be reduced to a unity and coherence even in individual consciousness not to speak of the collective consciousness: they cannot be reduced to unity and coherence 'freely' because this reduction could only happen in an authoritarian way, as in fact has happened in the past in a limited fashion (Gramsci, 1971:325-6)

The unstructured features shared by both popular religion and common sense could lead to contradictions in actual practice, resulting in conflicts within and between themselves. Nevertheless, common sense enabled popular religion to exist in people's experience, in the most immediate, obvious and spontaneous way, in Gramsci's term. Combined with this immediate perception of nature and human relationship, religion could eventually possess the character of active conception of the world.

iii) Religion as Total Praxis

As a socialist activist, Gramsci conceptualised belief or religious commitments to society at an emotional and affective level. He saw religious faith as a specific power of social praxis owing to its active relations with the world. For him, belief must be interpreted in functionalist terms as an active commitment to agency as well as in terms of its historical establishment as a substitute for identity. Since this attribute could turn belief into a form of total social praxis, Gramsci considered religion the only rival to socialism.

Religion is a need of the spirit. People feel so lost in the vastness of the world, so

thrown about by force they do not understand; and the complex of historical forces, artful and subtle as they are, so escapes the common sense that in the moments that matter only the person who has substituted religion with some other moral force succeeds in saving the self from disaster (Gramsci, 1971:71).

In this, he looked down on certain political ideologies (or so-called philosophy), in which intellectuals separated their political ideal from reality. Ideologies could not displace religion because the former was destined to become obsolete with changes in political systems, or in other words, the loss of hegemony. On the contrary, religion (and socialism) never loses sight of political reality thanks to the character of the total praxis.

However, in terms of total praxis, Gramsci pointed out different characteristics between religion of intellectuals and popular religion. According to him, religion of intellectuals (or official religion) had a conservative aspect which hampered the intellectual progress of the common people. That is, religion of intellectuals tended to ‘maintain a purely mechanical contact, an external unity based in particular on the liturgy and on a cult visually imposing to the crowd’ (Gramsci, 1971: 396:7).

Unlike religion of intellectuals, popular religion was not always conservative on behalf of the dominant class, and could even form even an alliance with radical political movements. Such an alliance would be based on shared fundamentals as well as political necessities.¹⁵ Gramsci believed that religion could encourage social change and resist its combination with ideology.

¹⁵ In Gramsci’s time, an emergence of liberal Christianity as part of popular revolutionary movements in Latin America attracted his attention.

Popular religion, in particular, could subvert the official religion of the elite class with the progress made by the masses, which would lead to the development of an alternative hegemonic culture according to their own understanding of the world combined with political reality.

Protestantism, the main topic of the thesis can be characterised as follows with regard to the Gramscian concepts of culture, cultural policy, and religion:

Table 1: Characteristics of Protestant Churches as Agents of Implicit Cultural Policies
(Source: Gramsci, 1971)

What kind of cultural value they propagate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ethical and normative values based on Protestant dogma ➤ Each church pursues different values and attitudes according to its denomination and its own political-ideological orientation
Agent for cultural policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each Protestant church ➤ Protestant Church organisations such as the KCF, the WCC, and the NCCK
Objectives of cultural policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The explicit goal is evangelisation through missionary activity ➤ The implicit goal depends on the political ideology in association with each church or church organisation.
Resources of cultural policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The clergy (organic intellectuals in Gramscian term) ➤ Protestant communities and networks at local, national, and international levels (social fundamental groups in Gramscian terms)
Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Protestant Population, based on the Protestant identity

Applying these concepts, in the next section, I will investigate the way in which official

religion could conduct implicit cultural policy towards the relations of social forces.

Chapter 2.2 Strategies of Religious Institutions towards Secular Society

This section looks at the way in which religious institutions¹⁶ promote implicit cultural policies in secular society since the twentieth century, using Gramsci's analytical framework. But first, this thesis will examine several different points to consider from Gramsci's time. Gramsci's focus was mainly on the relationship between citizens in Italy and the Roman Catholic Church. Although he claimed that his analysis of Roman Catholic Church in Italy can be more or less applicable to other religions of other countries, the contemporary world has more points to be considered than Gramsci's time, most of all, the change in social status of religion by geo-political circumstances, secularism, and multi-religious culture.

Religion as an Overlooked Element in Societal Structure

Secularisation theory in the contemporary world underestimated the flexibility of religious institution in adapting to the transformation of society. The theory made several assumptions as follows: First, according to Bruce (2006), it tended to equate religion with an immovable

¹⁶ In this thesis, the term 'religion' refers to official religion or religion of intellectuals in Gramsci's terms.

tradition, which was not of the new era of modernity, but of the old order. Second, secularisation theory regarded religions primarily as sets of concepts and beliefs supported by institutions, rather than as changing communities with contextually defined vision and motives (Bruce, 2006). Third, as Thomas (2005) criticised, a consequence of these two assumptions, this theory disregarded religions as an active player in public and political life and relegated them to the sphere of private inspiration. Eventually, the debate of secularist paradigm revolved around the question of whether the decline of religion was in process (Stark, 1999).

Although certain religious institutions have lost their power and influence in many communities, both old and new religious beliefs and practices have nevertheless continued in the lives of individuals, sometimes taking new institutional forms or leading to great explosions of religious fervour. We cannot deny that religious power still exists and that it has influenced the decisions of policy makers on domestic and foreign policies in secular society. For example, Syngman Rhee, the first President of the ROK, designated Christmas as a national holiday in 1948 for Christians, who only accounted for two percent of the population, while ignoring Buddhists and Confucians who comprised more than half of the population. Economically, we see how numerous megachurches in South Korea have benefitted from tax exemption as non-profit private organisations, although they have accumulated wealth by offertory and through their real estate business in South Korea and the United States. In foreign policies, we see the Dalai Lama who uses religion as a source of public legitimacy with strong moral appeals against the Chinese government.

Furthermore, as Gramsci (1971) discussed, we witnessed some active social movements using the cultural power of religious symbols to force their issues onto the public agenda when dealing with a variety of issues from politics to gender such as liberal theology in Latin America. These movements tended to combine moralised premises about social justice, opportunity or equality, which were relatively recognised as universal values, with specific political issues or policy decisions. In this coalition, religious doctrines could provide coherent and elaborated cognitive rationales to rectify social problems, and bestow moral justification on collective actions – and their ideologies as well.

From this perspective, religion should be regarded as the most powerful social power capable of creating a shared identity, a sense of solidarity, and a moral outrage integral to social movements. In this sense, religion could be seen as an ideological state apparatus, a social organisation where agreement over the existing social system was achieved between classes, where the emotional and cognitive elements of action could be combined with a universalistic legitimation, i.e., morality.

Different Spheres, Different Languages

In order to analyse the function of religious institutions as agents for implicit cultural policy, it is necessary to examine the social position of modern religions in detail. In the contemporary world, the way that religion functions must be different according to the characteristics of each religion as well as each community. With the principle of separation between religion and politics, modernisation shows a degree of ambivalence in relation to religion. On the one hand, it guarantees freedom from religion; on the other hand, freedom of

religion is also rapidly diffused with modernisation. The political and legal guarantee of freedom of religion has brought important transformations on both social and individual levels. Socially, religious pluralism and the diversification of religious views are more or less inevitable in the circumstance of freedom of religion.

Furthermore, in many cases, religious pluralism has led to the formation of a competitive religious market among various religions in a society (Bruce, 2006). For the individual, freedom of religion means that religion is not considered as a matter of destiny demanding obedience, but a matter of choice based on individual taste. As a result, as Berger (1969) stated, modern society has generalised heresy and generated rampant heretical views as religious relativity displaces religious absoluteness in the process of modernisation. In other words, under the principle of religious freedom, heresy always has the potential to invent new religions, while in pre-modern society it was the main target of persecution by the society's dominant religion.

Therefore, the homogeneous and stable religious terrain under the monopolistic religious rule in the pre-modern age has been transformed into heterogeneous and unstable grounds where multiple religions proliferate. These religions are competing with each other for the expansion of their spheres of influence over the human population. As belief comes to be regarded as a matter of personal choice, religious institutions can neither coerce people outside religion into having a specific faith, nor prevent insiders from deserting religion. Religion, at large, becomes the social domain resting on voluntary devotion and participation from the people. In this sense, reliance on the laity can be seen as the most noticeable feature

of modern religion. A religion can become a minority if it does not hold a dominant position in the religious market. Also, as governmental subsidies and support are lacking, new recruits' contribution became the main support to the religious institution's operation (Berger, 1969).

In this framework, the exercise of religious power can be broadly categorised into three spheres according to its target and its purpose.

- i) Within the religious sphere of a religion: This sphere consists of believers and clergies within the religious institution such as the church, and its main purpose is to systematically integrate and maintain its system through its religious doctrine.
- ii) On the border between the religious and the non-religious spheres: This border area consists of both believers and the unspecified public institutions managed by a religious institution, such as hospitals, schools, broadcasting companies, and other welfare facilities, in accordance with its ethical and religious norms. Its main purpose is to secure financial resources through commercial activities, to maintain influence toward the secular society, and to propagate its religious faith to people outside the religious community.
- iii) Non-religious and other religious spheres: This sphere consists of non-believers and other religious people. In this sphere beyond the religious norms concerned, the exercise of religious power is generally summarised as 'the politicisation' of moral issues' or 'moral politics.' The aims of religious institution in this sphere is to promote or stretch the ethical norms and moral

values derived from a religious dogma to people outside the religion through philanthropic works, citizen's campaigns or non-governmental organisational activities. Political activities seeking institutional interests of religion are also dealt with in this sphere.¹⁷

Among these three spheres, spheres (i) can be taken as the internal dimension of a religion's power whereas spheres (ii) and (iii) are external dimensions. While internal power is exercised to control its religious population and to maintain the system, external power is exercised on people outside the religious community and aims to expand public influence as well as to position itself favourably in political, economic, and cultural realms. In addition, it must be considered that plural religions and secularism can legally coexist but compete with each other. Furthermore, the boundaries between religious and non-religious spheres, as well as that among religious spheres, are porous and changeable. This circumstance leads to many problems and endless conflicts surrounding these boundaries.

In this circumstance, the external power of religion is confronted by two main difficulties. First, as Rhys Williams (2003) pointed out, the religious language¹⁸ spoken between believers has been different from the public language preferred by secularists, as a result of social differentiation, specialisation and religious pluralism. Public language is generally

¹⁷ This three-tier categorisation is restructured on the basis of Kang In-Cheol's categorisation of religious power (2009). While Kang's original suggestion shows blurred distinctions between spheres (ii) and (iii), this thesis aims to clarify their difference by bringing in the scope of religious norms into the discussion.

¹⁸ It seems that the term 'language' here means to Williams the same as it does to Gramsci, i.e. 'a way of speaking' or 'rhetoric' in a broad sense.

comprehensive and has a tendency to express based on universal values. On the other hand, religious language is sometimes regarded as a sectarian language by the public external to the religion. In this case, the religious language may end up evoking a sense of difference or, in the worst case, provoking a strong aversion to religion with negative associations such as intolerance and fundamentalism (Williams, 2003).

Second, based on the principle of religious pluralism and the separation between religion and the state, the exercise of religious power outside religious institution can cause controversies. If a religion excessively attempts to exert its influence on such non-religious spheres as politics, economics, or the media, already operated by their own autonomous systems, it will be criticised for infringing freedom of speech in the name of political secularisation of religion. For instance, it has been observed that Catholicism has sometimes come into conflict with the public when it stubbornly opposes abortion, birth control, divorce, and homosexual relationship due to clashes with its religious dogma. Furthermore, if a religion's exercise of power encroaches on the sphere of another religion, it can lead to religious conflicts.

In order to maintain its hegemony in such difficulties between the religious and non-religious sectors as well as between religions, the ultimate goal, pursued by religious institutions with their implicit cultural policy, is the increase of 'dual membership'. It means that religious institutions must strive consistently to find new members of religion, searching for potential members from the citizens belonging to the secular society, leading to the growth of religious population which, in turn, leads to the increase of the dual membership of believers and

citizens. In doing so, religion can achieve not only expansion of aggregation but also social influence beyond the religious sphere.

Strategies of Religious Institutions towards Secular Society

To elucidate how religious institutions in the contemporary world are agencies for implicit cultural policy, this thesis categorises their general strategies into three features in Gramscian terms. For the purpose of this categorisation, policies in Catholicism are also considered alongside Protestant policies because the former, as an official religion that most successfully developed its emblematic institutional system, can provide the best examples of implicit cultural policies.

a) Ethical Leadership

For religious institutions, the aim of implicit cultural policies is to successfully exercise the external power of religion; therefore, this kind of policy is generally carried out on the border between the religious and non-religious spheres or within the public-secular sphere. The most striking feature of implicit cultural policies developed by many religious organisations is the production of norms and ethical standards for individuals in secular society, which legitimise and reinforce existing social system. This normative aspect of religious institutions is primarily taken note of by Gramsci, who saw it as ‘intellectual and moral leadership’ performed by organic intellectuals (Gramsci, 1971:57), for it does not only provide a basis for internal challenge to existing social arrangements, but also influences the resulting social and cultural action.

Religions vary in doctrinal sophistication and in ethical norms. In the case of Christianity, both Catholicism and Protestantism have coherent and consolidated systems. In these systems, Christian morals are articulated by experts (theologians), and promulgated only after official approval. The range of Christian doctrines given to both priests and laity is extremely wide, ranging from personal and private moral codes – strictures against smoking, drinking, gambling, premarital and extramarital sexual activities, divorce, homosexuality, abortion, and contraception – to public moral issues such as social justice, poverty, corporate responsibility, the ethics of public policy and war (McGuire, 2002).

b) Propagating Religious Dogma as Common Sense in Popular Language

Religious norms and dogmas are promulgated by using ‘the public language’, in Gramsci’s words, or ‘secular terms’, as Bruce (2006) calls it, to eliminate the disharmony between the religious and public spheres, as well as to enable specific religious dogmas to permeate effectively within society. From a Gramscian perspective, this aspect of religious policy is equivalent to active endeavours that seek to connect official religions and popular religions organically.

An example of Christianity using ‘the public language’ to convey its argument to non-religious spheres can be found in its rhetoric of the pro-life movement. Rather than insisting on its religious dogmas using ‘the language of the religion’, Christianity, including both Catholicism and Protestantism, acts as a social pressure group arguing for the protection of human rights by using scientific and medical reasoning, such as recognising the embryo as a

life form. Also, through the integration of public rationalities, a religion's implicit cultural policy makes it possible for religious institutions to engage in political, economic, and social activities. This way, religious norms and moral principles can be embedded in the minds of the public, so that the religion concerned can gain advantage over rival religions in the religious market that still cling onto old customs against human rights or equality.

An outstanding example of this is the human rights movement by Catholicism. Ever since the promulgation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948, the issues of human rights were dramatically magnified by Pope John Paul II's defence in his address to the United Nations in 1995, which was in itself a statement about the priority of humanism over politics and economics. Combined with his ethical leadership, the Pope's address emphasised the global character of human rights revolutions around the world, the trans-cultural moral power of claims for human rights and the political potency of dedicated human rights movements, which were often religiously motivated (Weigel, 2005).

c) Combining with Political Ideologies and Activities

Religious values and dogmas are frequently associated with specific political-ideological values. Rhys Williams (2003) for example contended that religion found values that are deeply attached to more ephemeral political attitudes and financial interests. For example, the Evangelical Churches in South Korea as well as in the US are one of the most powerful supporters of capitalism. On the contrary, theology of liberation in Latin America in the twentieth century was profoundly influenced by Marxism.

These values in association with their attendant political attitudes solidify the power of political – and sometimes, financial – interests by creating public opinions, which consist of opinions of individuals who hold the same view and religious identity. In other words, in the cultural connection between religion and politics, culture can be seen as the aggregate of individual religious values. Furthermore, alliances between religion and politics are more than just theoretical approaches. Many denominations of Protestantism, particularly, the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches, had and still have a substantial political presence (Martin, 1999). In order to attain its religious-moral principles as well as political doctrines, Protestant churches began to form pressure groups together with specific political factions. For a more effective approach to political intervention, certain Protestantism, for example, the Christian Right in the US, attempted to negotiate with policymakers and local authorities, and also officially to support certain candidates or parties sympathetic to its religious point of view.

Thus, religion functions as a social force, or in Gramsci's terms, a total praxis. As he argued, the active engagement of religious groups in the political reality is deeply rooted in their emotional sense of belonging rather than rationalities. Because it is too complex for believers to clarify and to distinguish their faith from their political stance, these religions in association with politics should be analysed with respect to the link between the immediacy of sense perception and the effectiveness of utilising spirituality as active praxis.

Summary

The first section of this chapter dealt with Gramsci's conception of culture, cultural policy and religion. Gramsci explained culture in the context of his theory of hegemony and the integral state. For him, the notion of culture refers to certain values in civil society, shared among national members regardless of class. Culture has a capability of mobilising the mass, a preparatory stage in the gaining of hegemony. Finally, culture can be developed by fundamental social groups, accommodating both organic intellectuals and institutional systems.

Gramsci's conception of fundamental social groups implied that cultural policy should be understood more broadly than governmental activities. In this sense, this concept corresponds to the idea of implicit cultural policy as 'any political strategy that looks to work on the culture of the territory over which it presides' (Ahearne, 2009:143), but also as comprising 'a very much more diverse set of agents and agencies, all of which can be seen to business of cultural propagation' (Bennett, 2009:157).

Furthermore, religion is not defined merely as 'belief in the supernatural', but as something both encompassing it and extending beyond it. Gramsci saw religion as one of the cultural organisations for moral discipline and for preserving the ideological system within society. He classified religions according to social structure: official religion (or religion of intellectuals) as the institution of an ideological state apparatus, and popular religion (or religion of the people) as fragmentary and unstructured beliefs including various faiths, myths, moralities, or even superstitions concerning this-worldly desires.

The most important function of official religion was to create an organic link between the ruling class and the ruled class on the basis of mutually shared common sense, so as to prevent the production of counter-hegemony against the dominant ideological culture. In other words, official religion contributed to the maintenance of the state's hegemonic power as a means of social control at the level of the mind and the heart.

Popular religion, on the other hand, was a potential subaltern culture in opposition to the codified values of official religion. The takeover of power, then, could happen through moral transformation, by developing popular religion as an alternative hegemonic culture for both intellectuals and the masses. In this sense, Gramsci gave us a useful introduction to analysing religious institutions or religious movements as a source of power, by taking into account how religious believers understand themselves and interpret the secular world in which they actualise their existence.

The second section of this chapter conceptualised the strategies of religious institution as an agency for implicit cultural policy by applying Gramsci's notion of religion. Activities of religious institutions, with a view to maintaining its hegemony over the whole society, can be categorised as follows: i) establishing an ethical leadership beyond the religious sphere, ii) propagating religious dogma as common sense in popular language, and iii) combining religious movements with political ideologies and their derivative activities. By means of these strategies, a religious institution can effectively exercise its external power between religious and secular factors.

To conclude, a religious institution can, by means of implicit cultural policies, effectively exercise its external power through the confluence of religious and secular factors. By removing conflicts with outsiders, religion can gain social credibility and influence, as well as inculcate its religious dogma into secular society given its active participation in political reality.

Applying the concepts examined in this chapter, the next chapter will investigate changes in the DPRK's religious policies on the revival of the [North] Korean Christian Federation.

Chapter 3 Protestantism in North Korea: the Revival of Protestant Organisation and Legal Changes

Introduction

This chapter explores North Korean Protestantism authorised by the DPRK regime, focusing on the KCF's activities. Since the 1970s, as the DPRK attempted to bring about more frequent interchange with the ROK and the West, new evidence has come to light that a religious sphere remains, albeit in circumscribed form. The [North] Korean Christian Federation (KCF), the [North] Korean Buddhist Federation (KBF), and the Association of [North] Korean Catholic Church are the most crucial media engaged in non-governmental diplomacy with the West as well as South Korea. Among them, the KCF's activities were the most significant in international church communities. The more involved the KCF was in cultural-religious exchanges with western and South Korean churches, the more developed religious activities within North Korea became. It is a noticeable practice of the DPRK to actively acknowledge religions, as can be seen in its effort to include Protestantism during the period between the 1970s and the early 1990s.

Related to this religious situation in the DPRK, some conservative scholars, such as Koh Tae-Woo (1988) and Park Young-Ho (1984), dismissed the KCF's presence as a practical misuse of religion to obtain diplomacy. Nonetheless, what is certain is that religious activities in the DPRK have been allowed under restriction through the transformation of governmental

policy depending on international circumstances. Given that the increase in religious activities has helped to foster the improvement of diplomatic relations with the capitalist society including South Korea, the DPRK's religious sphere is seen to be susceptible to change in reaction to its external political situation.

With this assumption, this chapter focuses on the interweaving of political-historical contexts that have given rise to and transformed the present Protestant activities in the DPRK. Before exploring the KCF and the DPRK's policy on Protestantism, the first section of this chapter will look at the transformation of the historical background of North Korean Christianity before and after the establishment of the socialist regime, in order to figure out how the current relationship between Protestantism and the socialist regime was founded. Through investigating the hegemonic conflict between the KWP and the Pyong-An Protestants, this section highlights three important aspects: first, their conflicts denoted a competition for political and economic privileges, rather than being caused by religious activities; second, North Korean communism recognised North Korean Protestantism as the bitterest political rival rather than as a religious community, which subsequently influenced the DPRK's policy on Protestantism; third, this section sheds light on the diverse responses from North Korean Protestantism to Korean communism, on pro-communist Protestants, who maintained a cooperative relationship with the KWP during the nation-building process. This examination will refute the dogmatic definition of the hostile relationship between communism and Christianity, made by American conservative-fundamentalist Protestants, and will furthermore, provide an alternative explanation of the DPRK's ambivalent policies on Christianity. Through this examination, this section will answer the second research sub-

question of the thesis: Why was Protestantism significant in the process of the DPRK's nation-building process?

The second section features a full-scale investigation into the KCF's policies. In particular, this section examines the KCF's activities in two categories: ecclesiastical and political. With this categorisation, the section reveals that the revival of North Korean Protestantism was not derived by the citizens' demand, but by the diplomatic necessities for extending the state's international relations with capitalist countries. This section will answer the second sub-question of the thesis: why did the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism change from the 1970s onwards?

The third section looks at changes in the constitutional and legal regulations on religion in the DPRK, which were the ground rules for the KCF. This section indicates the extension of the second section in terms of the investigation into the transformation of the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism through changing the legal system, the Constitution, definitions of official dictionaries, and Kim Il-Sung's interpretation of religion (which is the most authoritative exposition in the DPRK). These changes would tell us the extent to which religious activities could be approved within North Korean society.

My focus in this chapter is ultimately on the two political purposes pursued by the DPRK government towards the KCF. Domestically, the DPRK government attempted to re-mould North Korean Protestantism into conforming to the unique national-cultural system while maintaining a proper ecclesiastical order. Internationally, with the activities of the KCF, the

DPRK strategically sought to improve its political stance in international relations. In this regard, it can be interpreted, from a Gramscian perspective, that the KCF's religious policy was not confined to civil society, but implicitly interwoven with political society, and was assimilated into the hegemonic power as an ideological vehicle favourable for the regime.

Literature Reviews

Currently, established research on Protestantism in the DPRK has been dominated by Korean theologians, except for a few publications from the West. Among them, *Protestantism and Politics in Korea* (2003), written in English by Park Chong-Shin, has contributed to our understanding of the political-ideological transformation of Korean Protestantism through a chronological presentation of the cultural history of Korean Protestantism between the 1910s and the 1980s, although, in the period following the Korean War, he focuses only on the history of South Korean Protestantism. Identifying Korean Protestantism as an ideological, political and cultural force, the book argued that various responses of Korean Protestantism – according to their different political, economic and cultural statuses as well as different denominations – were carefully interwoven within historical events that transformed the nation, such as the March First Movement, the territorial division, and the establishment of the communist regime in the North. However, this book presented no research on North Korean Protestantism after the Korean War.

Don Baker's *Korean Spirituality* (2009) and James Grayson's *Korea – A Religious History* (1989/2002) are two introductions on Korean religion most relevant to and widely circulated among western scholars. Both books share some common features, covering a broad range of

religions from Buddhism, Confucianism, Korean traditional folk religions, to modern nationalist religions and Christianity, and figuring out the interwoven processes of between ethnic Korean religious spirituality and imported religious identities from beyond Korean borders such as Christianity from the West.

Baker (2009) provided a glimpse into the religious situation in Korea, and distinguished spirituality from religiosity. The former is defined as individual attitudes and actions aiming for self-improvement, grounded in the belief that there is a more powerful and invisible force than humankind, while the latter refers to the collective activities in social organisation based on a common faith. However, as far as the formation of religious communities is concerned, Baker merely laid stress on ethical elements and outward forms (such as rituals) while paying scant attention to the ideological-political aspect of religion.

Grayson (1989/2002), on the other hand, attempts to outline a Korean religious history in the context of socio-political upheavals that transformed the nation. However, in the case of Christianity, introduced in the book's longest section entitled 'Korea in the Modern Era (1872-2000)', he oversimplified the relationship between the North Korean State and religion. For example, describing the religious situation in the Korean Peninsula shortly after the division, he claimed that there were 'different attitudes taken by the governing authorities towards religion' between Soviet and the US Occupations (Grayson, 2002:163). However, in this period, not every religion was suppressed by the Soviets in the North, and at the same time, not every religion was treated well by the US in the South. The Korean nationalist religion Cheondokyo, for example, was officially acknowledged as a local force by the

Soviets in the North while being discriminated by the US army in the South, as I discuss in the third section of Chapter Three. Unlike Grayson's argument, the autonomy of religious communities in the North was approved by the Soviets, which will be further discussed in the first section of this chapter.

Another problematic point in Grayson's book is his perspective on North Korean Protestantism. For example, without systematic research, he simply disparaged the KCF as a pseudo-religious organisation with a description of his personal experience: 'it was confirmed to me in the mid-1980s when I was told by a Korean Christian resident in China that they were amazed upon meeting a representative of the North Korean church that they knew nothing of the Bible' (Grayson, 1989/2002:163). However, my own view is that the responses of North Korean Protestantism to communism during the nation-building process were diverse and subject to influences from different denominations; it does not seem fair to define the KCF as a pseudo-religious organisation if we consider its proper ecclesiastical form. I will return to these arguments in the first and third sections of this chapter respectively.

In fact, the Korean scholars' perspective on North Korean Protestantism until the late 1980s was little different from Grayson's; Based on the anti-communist – more precisely, anti-North Korean – approach, Korean researchers uniformly claimed that 'religion does not exist in North Korea, and if does, it is only the process of suppression or annihilation of religion by the communists' (Koh, 1988:7). Park Young-Ho (1984) stressed the atheist character of the DPRK regime, where religion had no possibility of existing. This anti-communist tendency was pervasive in the research on North Korea between the 1970s and the early 1990s when

the religious exchange between North and South Korea had not yet been fully activated.

In this period, there was an exceptional Japanese theologian, Masahiko Sawa (1997), who contended that North Korean antagonism towards Christianity should be understood in a historical context, particularly bearing in mind the confrontation with the United States and pro-American Christians during the nation-building process. Similarly, Ryu Sung-Min (1999) argued that Christianity was a dependent variable for the establishment of the communist regime. Thus, the DPRK's religious policy, whether it pursued the absence or suppression of religion in North Korea, must be studied in line with the maintenance of the regime. However, these scholars' arguments did not surmount the negative impression of communism and of the generalisation of the North Korean government's suppression of Christians.

It was in the mid-1990s that an increasing amount of literature began to consider changes in the religious sphere in North Korea. As Christian exchanges between South and North Korea increased, a growing body of information came to light from field investigations and interviews with North Korean believers. Among them, research conducted by Kang In-Cheol (1992a; 1992b; 1993; 1994; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2008; 2009), Kim Heung-Soo (1992; 1997; 2000; 2002; 2003a; 2003b; 2005; 2007; 2013) and Ryu Dae-Young (2002; 2009) were particularly distinctive from previous studies, in the sense that they drew attention to religious life in North Korean society, based on their field research in North Korea.

These academics gave different views and proposed to look at religion in North Korea from an angle that broke away from the ideologically prejudiced view so far. According to Kim

Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002), the diversity of religious faith in North Korea must be accepted because it is inevitable for religion to comprise distinct characteristics in accordance with the societal environment which it permeates. Ryu Dae-Young (2009) also examined the historical change in North Korean policy toward Christians. In particular, he highlighted Kim Il-Sung's attitude to Christianity based on first-hand materials published in North Korea, including Kim's speeches and writings.

On the other hand, Kang In-Cheol's approach was slightly different from the three researchers above, as his focal point was not on North Korea but on South Korea. Pointing out that the South Korean distrust of North Korean Christianity, which stemmed from the conflict between the communists and the pro-American Christians, distorted the picture of the current religious policy in the DPRK, he urged a redefinition of the history of Christianity in North Korea and a building up of mutual understanding on Christianity between North and South Koreas. Likewise, as far as Christianity is concerned, these scholars have considered the singularity of North Korea's social system, its specific historical background, and its special attitude toward religion that even differed from other socialist countries, in order to conclude that North Korean Christianity can be seen as an alternative way of belief, as a result of the unique way North Korea has adapted religion. This kind of viewpoint enables us to presume that North Korea has formed its own religious sphere with a different understanding of religion within the frame of their national ideology.

However, like the anti-communist approach, these liberal approaches¹⁹ like those of Kim

¹⁹ In this thesis, the term 'liberal' (equivalent to '*Jinbo*' in Korean) is used to counter the term

Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young also have, in my view, several shortcomings. First of all, these pieces of research are framed deliberately within the reunification discourse. In reality, this liberal approach is as problematic as the blanket opposition to the communist regime, because such research may be affected by the researchers' nationalist sentiment, thus undermining the strength of their argument (As a Korean who was brought up in South Korea, I was also exposed to the strong influence of the ideological education – nationalism and anti-communism – between 1970s and 1990s. Therefore, I must confess that I am not completely free from those sentiments notwithstanding my efforts).

Furthermore, in terms of religious freedom in North Korea, although liberal scholars conducted their research based on first-hand data, the resources of their studies were too limited in order to be generalised. For example, the scholars' experiences with the North Korean religious sphere were restricted to certain cities, while violent suppression of Christianity, as testified by North Korean refugees, was mostly witnessed in the remote regions near the border, which were still inaccessible to South Koreans and foreigners. Also, the DPRK's official documents on which the liberal scholars relied only showed the government's official position, which could also be isolated from reality. No alternative approaches could have existed within the DPRK, because the government had overwhelming

'conservative' ('*Bosu*') or 'anti-communist' ('*Bangong*'). In political terms, the 'liberal' approach is understood in South Korea as leftism, but not pro-communist, for pro-communist activity is illegal. In the religious sphere of South Korea, activities of the more liberal churches often indicate a nationalist sentiment. Generally in South Korea, liberal Protestant Churches belong to the National Council of Churches in [South] Korea (NCK) while conservative Protestant Churches belong to the Christian Council of [South] Korea (CCK).

control over academic and political writings. In this regard, it is likely that serious doubts will arise around the potential generalisations in their academic work.

Most of all, due to their religious – mostly Christian – identity, the interests of theologians, both anti-communist (conservative) and liberal ones, were restricted to religious affairs and doctrines in the Church, rather than in the socio-cultural influence of religion over society and international relations. In other words, both arguments tend to obstinately but unnecessarily doubt or espouse the genuineness of religious activities in North Korea, which is impossible to verify in the first place. In this regard, the gulf between the two approaches towards the understanding of Christianity in North Korea can be seen as a fault line between their respective theological bases: either pro-American evangelicalism combined with anti-communism, or liberal theology combined with nationalism.

In fact, this dichotomy, in which research on the North Korean religious sphere was conducted by only theologians whose focus was mostly on the genuineness of the faith, was the result of another paradigm, namely secularism. Since the Age of Enlightenment, with the separation between religion and the state, there has been a clear distinction between the religious and non-religious (secular) spheres in western society (Bruce, 2006). However, this distinction also created a preconception that religious and non-religious spheres can never interact. The Korean academic field is not free from the influence of this separation, where the study of Christianity has been monopolised by theologians. In Korea, apart from philosophy or literature, which is influenced by religion metaphysically, and cultural anthropology, which looks at folk beliefs, only a few scholastic practices have treated religion

as one of the elements in the social structure organically connected to other secular sectors such as politics, economics or international relations (Kim, S., 2004). The very same situation can be seen in the study of the DPRK's religious policy. Theological research regarded the DPRK's religious policy as an internal affair within the church, and only alluded vaguely to the influence from secular society.

Chapter 3.1. The DPRK's Religious Sphere before the Korean War and the Establishment of the KCF

Many scholars' assumptions on North Korean practices are predicated on the fact that their concept of religion and anti-religion, and the accompanying policies, are the result of influence from strong Soviet intervention during their occupation of North Korea. For example, Sawa (1997) highlighted the Soviet's interference in the domestic affairs of North Korea just after emancipation from Japan. However, the anti-religious inclination in the DPRK cannot wholly be seen as solely the imitation of Soviet policy. During the Soviet's Occupation between 1945 and 1948, recent researchers such as Armstrong (2003) and Suh Jah-Jung (2013) revealed that North Korea was granted a relatively greater degree of cultural autonomy than other East European socialist countries as long as they avoided criticising the Soviet government, and there was more sensitivity to aspirations for national and social liberation in the Soviet 'zone' than there was from the Americans in South Korea.

This autonomy was applicable to religious policy as well. Shortly after decolonisation, there were apparent movements in North Korea to form political forces within the Protestant Church and Cheondokyo (a Korean nationalist religion) in order to lead the nation-building process, and the Soviets and the KWP showed a prudent approach to both religious communities, having recognised them as powerful political rivals from the beginning. Lee and Scalapino's work (1972) shows that the Cheondokyo camp was successfully assimilated into the communism, but the Protestant force held an antagonistic relationship with the communists in the process of nation-building.

The clash between North Korean Protestants and communists had two key aspects not shared by other communist countries: it indicated both a confrontation between pro-Americanism and patriotism, and class struggle between the privileged and the underprivileged. As if the intermingling of religious identity and politico-economic stance was not complicated enough, there was also a split between pro- and anti- communists emerged within North Korean Protestantism. With regard to this, this thesis claims that the conflict between the communists and the Protestants in North Korean society was not a matter of religion, but was the result of hegemonic competition for political and economic power.

To provide a better context, this section will first outline the religious terrain of North Korea around the end of Japanese colonisation in 1945.

The Protestant Sphere of the DPRK before 1945

Throughout the colonial period, Christianity, in particular Protestantism, made a dramatic

advance. In terms of proportion of the population, Korean Protestantism gained a following far larger than in China or Japan when freed from the Japanese Occupation, with more Christians populating the North than the South.²⁰ According to the statistics published in the *Chosun Central Yearbook [Chosun jung-ang yeongam]* of 1946 (Korean Central News Agency, 1947), there were 0.2 million Protestants in the North just after liberation, which accounted for two-thirds of the total Protestant population in the whole Korean Peninsula. Although this figure only represented 2.2 percent out of a North Korean population of around 9.15 million, Protestantism in the colonial period was regarded as one of the most powerful socio-political forces in North Korea, with a following from numerous intellectuals, a well-organised system, and huge economic and administrative support from western missionaries.

Since decolonisation, Korean Protestantism remained a multitude of disparate groups and denominations due to the territorial division policy by the plural western missionaries. Since the late nineteenth century, the Council of Missions in Korea, a collaborative Presbyterian organisation between the Northern and Southern Missions (from the US), the Canadian Mission, the Australian Mission, and the Methodists, had been carrying out a territorial division policy in order to conserve their limited resources and to avoid conflict or competition between foreign missionaries (Joo, 1998). Under the policy, the Council assigned separate regions to each denomination as follows:

²⁰ According to the Chosun Central Yearbook of 1946, shortly after decolonisation, there were around 200,000 Protestants, 53,000 Catholics, 500,000 Buddhists, and 1,500,000 believers of Cheondokyo.

Table 2: The Regional Distribution of the Western Missionaries in the Korean Peninsula in the 1920s (Source: Park, 2003)

Mission	Region
Northern Presbyterian	Pyong-An, Hwang-Hae (north-western, middle-western)
Southern Presbyterian	Cholla (south-western)
Australian Presbyterian	Kyong-Sang (south-eastern)
Canadian Presbyterian	Ham-Kyong (north-eastern), Kando (Chientao)
Methodist	Kyong-Gi (middle-west, near Seoul), Kang-Won (middle-east)

Among the regions, Pyongyang and the surrounding Pyong-An Province were famous for being the pivotal city for missionaries. In his PhD thesis, Park Chong-Shin (2003) gave a detailed account of Pyongyang as the city where Korean Protestantism was centralised in the late colonial era: With twenty thousand Protestants in more than seventy churches among a total of 0.4 million citizens, Pyongyang enjoyed a great reputation as the ‘Jerusalem in the East.’ American missionaries and their Korean Protestant followers were authorised to decide the main policies for all Protestant Churches all over the country in the colonial period, showing a considerable influence of the Protestant population and prominent Korean church leaders. Major Protestant institutions, meetings, and activities were centralised in Pyongyang rather than in Kyong-Sung (Seoul), the capital city of colonial Korea, not least because the only place for theological and clerical training was located in Pyongyang, namely the Pyongyang Seminary, and not in Seoul (Park, 2003).

Some historians of Korean Christianity, such as Seo Jeong-Min (1994), Lee Yong-Min (2013), and Lee Jin-Gu (1994), argued that this region had the ideal conditions for the growth of western missionaries. First, Pyong-An is located in the border with China, which had a history of vigorous international exchanges as well as foreign invasion. In its specific

historical geographical circumstances, citizens there had a flexible and open-minded tendency toward new culture and technology (Seo, 1994). Second, Lee Yong-Min (2013) pointed out that this region was politically isolated from the central government before colonisation. Despite being a strategic stronghold for national defence and diplomacy, Pyong-An intellectuals were regionally discriminated during the Chosun period, as the central government was reluctant to assign important posts to them. As a result, instead of Korean aristocrats including politicians (yangban), the local rich, middle-class merchants, who were financially independent and relatively free from the Confucian hierarchical system, could establish a firm foothold in the region (Lee, Y., 2013). It was under this circumstance that residents of this region became one of the first Koreans who showed enthusiasm toward western Protestantism. Due to their underprivileged and disadvantaged social status, they sought new social orders that made possible the unusual receptiveness to Protestantism and the embrace of modern values such as equality (Lee, J., 1994).

In response to the aspirations of the local people for a new social-cultural order, the influence of American Presbyterian missionary reached far beyond the church. Economically, they attracted US capital to invest in a decent number of industries and modern business (Lee, J., 1994). After the collapse of the Chosun dynasty and when the Japanese colonial government was not able to expand their full commercial power in Pyong-An due to local resistance,²¹ American capital especially those that supported voluntary and charitable causes such as hospital, nursery and schools (which were generally managed by American missionaries),

²¹ Due to hostility to the infringement on national sovereignty, Pyong-An merchants were famous for their boycott against Japanese goods in the beginning of colonisation (Seo, 1994). This anti-Japanese sentiment was one of the contributions to facilitating western investment in this region.

was warmly welcomed by the local citizens.

For example, according to Yun Dong-Hyeon's research, there were 511 Christian-affiliated schools in Pyong-An in 1910, which accounted for 78 percent of the total Christian-affiliated schools in the country (Yun, 1986). We can infer from this number that the concentration of educational facilities contributed to the concentration of intellectuals in this region before decolonisation.

Through these social-welfare services backed by commercial investment and intellectual leaders fostered by the Protestant educational institutions, the Protestants rose as a new social force under the support of American missionaries. After the Confucian hierarchy was overthrown with the collapse of the Chosun dynasty, these Protestants, who had been mostly powerless aristocrats or the underprivileged, gained respect in the community with their modern intelligence and status in the religious community. In the mid-1920s, in addition to a huge middle class of rich Protestant merchants, there were around five thousand Protestant intellectuals working for religious, educational and cultural organisations managed by churches (Kim, S., 2001). During the colonial period, Pyong-An Protestant leaders replaced Confucian intellectuals as a new privileged cultural class by associating themselves with capitalism, which was an inevitable consequence in the commercially developed region, and by capitalising on their advanced knowledge acquired from the modern educational institutions founded by American missionaries (Park, 1992).

With respect to American missionaries in North Korea, Kang In-Cheol, a researcher

specialising in studies of Korean Christianity, noticed the following two characteristics. First, under the influence of American missionaries, pro-American Protestant leaders perceived themselves as subordinate to western churches rather than as independent institutions (Kang, 1993). Protestant Churches in most regions were largely dependent on material and administrative support from the western churches, albeit in various degrees, which would eventually hinder the self-sustained growth of the Korean churches (Kang, 1993). By monopolising religious authority from the distribution of human and material resources to theological interpretations,²² American missionaries could reinforce the superiority of western – especially, American – culture within the Korean Protestant community.

Second, American missionaries imposed their fundamentalist-conservative belief, which dogmatised the strict moral code based on the Bible and the extreme expression of the monotheist concept ostracising any other religions. The American Presbyterians' dogmatic adherence to conservative-fundamentalist beliefs even drew conflict in their own headquarters. Many Korean theologians trace the origin of conservative-fundamentalist feature of Korean Evangelical Church back to Machen's influence. Machen was the American founder of the Orthodox Presbyterian denomination in 1920s, in opposition to liberal theology that encompassed the diversity of biblical interpretation and ideology. His denomination was expelled from the North American Presbyterian Assembly in 1929 due to its exclusive fundamentalism. However, he could still perform missionary works with official

²² Lee Ho-Woon, a Methodist cleric who founded Mogwon University in the South, argued that, at the beginning stage, some American Presbyterian missionaries selected less-educated Korean people as religious workers on purpose, and prevented Korean Christians from studying abroad in order to maintain the superiority of western priests (quoted in Kang, 1992b).

approval from the foreign clergies in the Korean Presbyterian Assembly in 1938, and his congregation even gained supremacy among churches in Pyongyang to become a notably thriving Protestant community in Pyong-An (Kang, 1993).

Related to this, William Scott, a Canadian missionary who came to Korea in the colonial period, pointed out the theological climate of the day:

It should be remembered that the modern missionary movement and founding of indigenous churches coincide with a period of keen theological controversy in the United States [...]. In 1910 Dr. R. A. Torrey published ten small booklets entitled 'Fundamentals' and the conservative group became known as 'Fundamentalists'. [...] In 1929, the chief defender of 'orthodoxy', Dr. J.G. Machen was dismissed from his chair at Princeton Seminary, and left to found Westminster Seminary and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. These events had a marked influence on the establishment and nurture of the Korean Presbyterian Church. Almost all the missionaries sent to Korea by the American Presbyterian churches were men who strongly supported the ultra-conservative side in the controversy. [...] The Korean Presbyterian Church, from the beginning, was given a strong fundamentalist bent (Scott, 1975:205-6).

Park Hyeong-Nyong, former professor at the Pyongyang Seminary during the colonial period and often termed 'Machen in Korea' or 'the father of extreme conservative theology in Korea', observed that the theological tradition of the Korean Presbyterian Church was

‘fundamentally rooted in the theology embodied in the Westminster Standards, the Orthodox Calvinistic theology in Europe, and the theology of the Puritanism in England and America’ (Park, 1976:30). Park’s theology had several points in common with the Korean conservative theological position. First, the verbal inspiration theory was fundamental to their view of scripture, that is, Biblicism. Second, personal salvation and faith of other-worldliness were emphasised. In other words, both were anti-historical and anti-social, recognising the importance of only the inner life of faith. Third, both were past-oriented traditionalist theology, since they insisted on the orthodoxy of the foundations of tradition laid in the past. Finally, they insisted on the absoluteness of Christianity and took an exclusive, crusader-like attitude towards other religions. Park said this about other religions: ‘the attitude of the religion of Jesus Christ to other religions was one not of compromise, but rather one of confrontation and conquest’ (Park, 1966:8). The ultra-conservative theology in Korea was therefore anti-ecumenical in nature.

In line with this, various Korean scholars, who had a critical attitude towards the influence of American missionaries over Korean society, commonly pointed out that the American missionaries ignored the nationalist sentiment in the colonial period in order to avoid conflicts with the Japanese, and in order to secure their socio-economic superiority from local Protestants. According to Park Chong-Shin (2003), while emphasising a personal salvation placed above the collective need of their theological doctrine, the American missionaries implied the inferiority of nationalist culture. Park Qu-Hwan (2013) also analysed church sermons toward Korean believers by American missionaries during the colonial period. What he found was that rigorous Puritan habits, such as keeping the Sabbath and banning smoking,

dancing and gambling, were insisted on whereas social and political issues related to the national independent movement were strictly abandoned for the reason that ‘one who loves his nation more than Christ is not for Christ’ (Park, Q., 2013).

In fact, the most controversial church issue in relation to Protestantism in Pyong-An was the negative stance of some churches on political activities inspired by nationalism; the American other-worldly theology for its hypocritical and dogmatic approach to patriotism under the colonial regime was the subject of criticism among religious communities. One example related to this was the controversy surrounding evangelical preaching by American clergies, such as ‘God is punishing Korea and that independence would not come until the nation atoned for its sins’ (Wales and Kim, 1941/1972:83).

However, the exclusive power of American missionaries resulted in challenges from other denominations in other regions. For instance, a few studies on the history of Canadian missionaries in the colonial period, including Kim Yun-Sung’s (1994), Kim Seung-Tae’s (2000), and Ruth Compton Brouwer’s (1998), commonly emphasised that apart from Pyong-An, the Canadian Presbyterian Churches centred around Wonsan in Ham-Kyong, tolerated nationalist and patriotic movements in their local religious policy. In fact, Canadian missionaries in Ham-Kyong Province, especially William Scott and D.A. McDonald, were famous for their opposition to the Japanese colonial policy, and they often came into conflict with the Japanese government due to their cooperation with Korean liberation activists.

Kim In-Seo, a Protestant minister and publisher of the theological magazine entitled *The*

Religious Life [Sin-ang-saeng-hwal] in the 1930s, discussed how the disputes over the nationalist need of colonised people became a regional split between the north-western hegemony and non-north-western Protestant groups during the colonial period in his magazine (1936). As each region began to consolidate its own identity according to different denominational/theological doctrines, opposite political stances on the colonial regime (anti- or pro-Japanese), and diverging regional interests, interdenominational cooperation was minimised. The schism between denominations over nationalist issues was further revealed in the different approaches toward the socialist regime after decolonisation.

The Political Sphere of North Korea after Decolonisation

With an unexpected liberation from Japanese colonialism in 1946, the Korean people encountered a political and administrative vacuum that could have resulted in complete chaos. Considering this period, many scholars, such as Armstrong (2003), Cumings (1981), Lee Chong-Sik and Scalapino (1972), and Park Chong-Shin (2003), agree that it was the Protestant leaders who initially steered the people toward building a new nation to prevent social turmoil through creating autonomous administrative bodies throughout the country. With its following of intellectuals, wealth, and well-organised institutional systems, the Korean Protestant Church obviously had the potential to come up with a political replacement just after the sudden collapse of the old system. The administrative bodies ranging from the level of local police (the People's Committees) to the central government (the Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence, CPKI) were organised not by the Soviet or the US military in the Korean Peninsula, but by the Korean Protestants from the bottom.

Except for Ham-Kyong, various political and administrative organisations in the North were generally led by Protestant leaders from Pyong-An, most of whom were influenced by American missionaries (Park, 2003). Contrary to their passive attitude towards political involvement during the colonial period, these Pyong-An Protestant leaders were swiftly and actively engaged in the political sphere in order to cope with the dynamics of social change. For example, the following table shows the political groups founded by Pyong-An Protestants in the year of decolonisation.²³ Besides organising administrative bodies, we can see that the Pyong-An Protestants were also the first social force to form political parties since liberation.

Table 3: Political and Administrative Group Founded by Protestants after Liberation
(Source: Armstrong, 2003; Park, 2003)

Date (1945)	Political and administrative group founded by Protestants
17 th August	The People's Political Committee of the Five Provinces
September	The Christian Social Democratic Party
October	The Joint Presbytery of Provinces in the North
November	The Korean Democratic Party (KDP)

On the other hand, there was another religion that exerted strong influence, namely Cheondokyo, a Korean nationalist religion whose roots lay in the peasant uprising against foreign imperialism during the late Chosun dynasty in 1812, so-called 'Dong-Hak' movement. Although this religion advocated individual cultivation in the same way as Christianity, it held strong antagonism to western²⁴ as well as Japanese culture, and rejected any notion of an afterlife while putting its emphasis on the social welfare in this world (Ko, 2005).

²³ 15th August 1945

²⁴ Dong-Hak [Knowledge from the East], the origin of Cheondokyo, was intentionally entitled as an expression of antagonism to western influence.

Unlike Christianity, Cheondokyo remained an underground religion throughout the Japanese Occupation due to its strong nationalist and subversive character, but was fully revived soon after liberation by the support of poor peasantry. The geographical centre of Cheondokyo was the Pyong-An area, similar to Christianity, but the members and their distribution were notably different. According to the common descriptions of Lee Chong-Sik and Scalapino (1972) and Armstrong (2003), while many Christians belonged to the wealthy middle-class and were highly visible in the cities, Cheondokyo had a stronger following among farmers in the rural area. Like The Korean Democratic Party (KDP) of the Protestant leaders, Cheondokyo also entered into political rivalry for ideological hegemony by organising their own political wing, called the Young Friends' Party (*Cheongwudang*, YFP), which was initially formed in 1919 but dissolved under the suppression of the Japanese.

Facing the religious powers of Korea upon their arrival in Pyongyang in 1945, the Soviet authority approved the political activities of these religious institutions, a privilege not enjoyed in other Soviet satellite states. According to documents published by the Soviet military government in Korea, the Soviet officially handed over the authority from the Japanese to the North Korean Provisional People's Committee, which was led by Protestant leaders, whereas the US Army ignored the autonomous administrative organisations in the South. Also, Stalin issued an order to his army in North Korea, stating that 'any religious rituals or services of local people should not be disturbed', and that 'any invasion of churches or worship places is not allowed' (quoted in Cumings [et al.], 1982:262).

On the point of the Soviet's tolerant policy on local social forces in North Korea, Armstrong

(2003) analysed that the Soviet was less interested in Korea (and Manchuria as well) than in Japan; i.e; Stalin's aspiration to communise the Korean Peninsula was only modest, for he was more concerned about the remilitarisation of Japan after the Second World War. However, Ryu Dae-Young (2009) presented a different opinion. According to him, the Soviet could not ignore the leadership of the two Korean religious communities – Protestantism and Cheondokyo – which had strong local influence when communist control was still tenuous in most regions. Ryu seems to make a valid point regarding the report by the Soviet supervisors about the process of negotiation in the constitutional assembly in 1948.²⁵ According to this report, while the draft of the DPRK Constitution reflected mostly that of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, the local religious leaders showed the most determined opposition to the specific criteria related to religious freedom including doctrines for the separation of religion and the state. In this report, the Soviet supervisors expressed concern over 'the YFP's political and popular influence in the United Front, [which] may have a deleterious impact' (quoted in Kim K., 2008:243). Their concern was resulted in the change in the draft, as the Soviet Army conceded to the demands of Cheondokyo. In this regard, we can argue that the Soviet carefully considered the social leverage of local religious forces.

Whether by instructions from the Soviet Army, as Scalapino and Lee (1972) argued, or by the Korean Communists' voluntary endeavours since colonisation, according to Armstrong's claim (2003), what was obvious was that the Korean Communists also pursued an amicable relationship with both Protestantism and Cheondokyo in North Korea. Showing a very strong

²⁵ This report was translated from Russian into Korean in Kim Kuk-Hoo's book entitled *A Secret Memoir: the Soviet Military Administration in Pyongyang – Documents and Testimonies on the Birth of North Korean Regime* (2008).

patriotic-nationalist inclination rather than proletarian class-revolution, Kim Il-Sung and his Party approached the local forces calling for the solidarity of the Korean people. Particularly, in order to facilitate communication with the conservative Pyong-An Protestant politicians, Kim appointed famous Protestant-communist leaders such as Kang Ryang-Uk, Hong Ki-Ju, and Choi Yong-Gon at high ranking positions in his party. Needless to say, Kim used them as a bridge between the Korean Workers' Party and the Korean Democratic Party (KDP) (Kim, H., and Ryu, 2002; Park, 2003; Yoo, K., 2004).

Scholars analysed Kim Il-Sung's conciliation with Protestant leaders at this stage in both political and personal ways. On the one hand, Kim Heung-Soo (2002) and Ryu Dae-Young (2002; 2009) paid attention to Kim's personal background: Personally, Kim had a close affinity with Protestantism because of his experience of being surrounded by Protestant influences in his formative years. According to Kim's own autobiography entitled *With the Century* (1992a), both of Kim's parents were committed Protestants, and his maternal lineage was especially famous for being a Protestant-intellectual family that founded a Christian school and produced many clerics. Furthermore, his autobiography indicated friendliness towards Cheondokyo as well. In this book, Kim mentioned his close relationship with Park In-Jin, a famous Cheondokyo leader during the colonial period, who participated in the anti-Japanese resistance with Kim Il-Sung.

On the other hand, Cumings (1981) and Park Chong-Shin (2003) pointed out that there was a more urgent political reason for Kim's policy of appeasement toward religious forces. At that time, Kim Il-Sung could not ignore the Protestants' enormous local power because he, like

other returnees from political exiles, did not have any immediate and solid political foundation except the Soviet's support. For Kim and his unstable party in the early stages, cooperation with the Protestants' leadership would be ideal to mobilise the public.

For these reasons, and in conformity with a social consensus about the need for a pan-national affiliation, Kim Il-Sung was not reluctant to carry forward a tripartite alliance between Kim Il-Sung's [North] Korean Workers' Party (KWP), the Protestants' Korean Democratic Party (KDP), and Cheondokyo's Young Friends' Party (YFP), called the Democratic National United Front.

Hegemonic Conflicts between the Communists and the Pyong-An Protestants

Despite the United Front, the Protestant leaders in the KDP ultimately had distinct pursuits from the KWP and YFP in the United Front. The three parties of the United Front rhetorically claimed to work toward common goals: social reform through the elimination of colonial rules, national independence, and unification with the South (Park, 2002; Armstrong, 2003). However, the KDP was supported by the propertied class such as entrepreneurs, landlords and intellectuals in Pyong-An. For this reason, Park Chong-Shin (2003) and Kang In-Cheol (2005) both assessed that the KDP sought moderate reforms such as cultural cultivation and the improvement of living standards, while evading the issue of radical reform like the abolition of farm tenancy. Despite their rhetoric of fighting for the welfare of 'the whole nation', they fundamentally ignored the lives of the poor, landless peasantry which was the majority of the population (Kang, 2005). Over time, the KDP confirmed its identity as a unity of social elites espousing bourgeois interests, with its gradualist approach to social, economic, and political

change.

In contrast, both the KWP and the YFP were established with a support base from the underprivileged masses under the colonial government. When building the KWP in 1945, Kim Il-Sung was critical of a party led by intellectuals rather than by the working class. In order to consolidate his political foundation, which was relatively inferior to the local religious forces, Kim Il-Sung sought to transform the KWP from an elite party to a mass party by extending its membership to the urban proletariat, the poor, rural peasantry as well as the working class, the latter of whom then constituted more than two-thirds of the rural population of North Korea. In one of his earlier speeches in 1945, he indicated his mass-oriented approach thus:

The Korean Workers' Party (KWP) should not remain as an organisation for the minority of elite communists. The KWP ought to pursue the party grounded in the broad mass of people ranging from labourers to farmers, with an aim to spearhead the revolution for the construction of new Korea. Hence, we need to extend our party to embrace more outstanding individuals, who can sacrifice themselves for the construction of an independent nation, whether they are labourers, farmers, or progressive intellectuals (Kim, I., 1992c:255).

Thanks to the political appeal to poor farmers, the KWP rapidly expanded with the support of the underprivileged. According to the official documents of the KWP Convention, party membership increased from 4,500 in 1945 to 752,000 in 1948 (The Board of National

Unification, 1988:145). Among these, the numbers of labourers and poor peasantry in 1948 were 143,000 and 374,000 respectively (The Board of National Unification, 1988:148).

Furthermore, once it established political supremacy through the expansion of party membership, the KWP implemented a rapid reformation that included land reform, revision of labour laws, and nationalisation of major industrial facilities. Particularly, the land reform was the earliest and the most significant step in subverting the old system and creating a new one. At the same time, the implicit aim of the land reform was, for sure, to dismantle the propertied class, who were suspected of being accomplices during the Japanese colonial period.²⁶

Undoubtedly, a considerable number of Protestant leaders, many of whom were feudal landlords, became an object of socialist criticism due to their material possessions. The middle-class pro-American Protestants and some sizable churches, being minority, were divested of their financial resources in the reform (Park, 2003; Armstrong, 2003; Strong, 1949). Related to this, Kang Ryang-Uk, a pro-communist cleric, who led the social reform in cooperation with Kim Il-Sung, argued that those Christian defectors' denunciation of the KWP mostly had to do with 'a matter of [their loss of] wealth', not 'matter of belief' (Strong, 1949). In this sense, then, some of the claims made by defecting clerics to the South, especially those saying that the land reform was the communist policy aiming to suppress religious people, may not be entirely convincing.

²⁶ At that time, eighty percent of the total population were peasants, but almost sixty percent of the whole cropland was owned by landlords, who accounted for only four percent of the population (Armstrong, 2003).

In order to protect their privileges, the pro-American Protestants attempted to spread anti-communist sentiment. They claimed that Korean leftists were traitors who betrayed the country to the Soviet on the ground of the Korean Peninsula trusteeship issue (Kang, M., 2009; Lee, J., 2011): when a five-year trusteeship over the Korean Peninsula was agreed by the international superpowers at the Moscow Foreign Ministers' Conference in December 1945, Kim Il-Sung and the Korean Communists endorsed the trusteeship following the Comintern's guidelines, while most Korean people opposed to trusteeship. Also, resisting the establishment of the communist regime, the pro-American Protestant leaders boycotted the People's Committee election in September 1946, the first major political act for the sovereign state.²⁷ The Joint Presbytery of Five Provinces (hereafter Joint Presbytery) in the North issued a resolution opposing the election being held on a Sunday, the day of Sabbath, as well as opposing the political use of churches for the election (Ryu, 2009).

However, through Gramscian lens, these attempts were not compelling enough to cope with the dynamics of political change, now being reorganised as an ideological confrontation between revolutionary and anti-revolutionary movements. First, in the conflict with the KWP, the Pyong-An Protestants lost the ethical leadership, in Gramscian terms, due to their advocating moderate reform in favour of the middle class. Furthermore, their strong opposition to the KWP's land reform was recognised as an anti-revolutionary movement against the interests and needs of the majority of citizens including the poor peasantry and urban labourers.

²⁷ Before the election, North Korea did not have any official sovereign body at the national level.

Second, their pro-American activities in the process of nation-building were regarded as the work of traitors. Many Protestant leaders in the north, who were the beneficiaries of American missionaries, openly endorsed the US government, as previously stated. Han Kyong-Jik, a famous evangelical Protestant minister in Pyong-An, officially presented his wish to establish in the North a Christian state 'like America, the most blessed and peaceful country in the world' (Han, 1949:21). The news of the arrival of the Soviet military administration and the subsequent establishment of the communist regime were threatening enough for the pro-American Protestants to prepare for defence in the political field. For this reason, some Pyong-An Protestants attempted to communicate secretly with the US Army in the South in order to hamper the establishment of communist regime. In the process, sanguinary collisions between pro- and anti-communist forces occurred in the major cities throughout the region, including Pyongyang, Yong-am Po, and Sinuiju.²⁸ However, the majority of population, who joined the Party and benefitted from the economic reform by the KWP, perceived their pro-American and anti-communist movement as anti-national activities. From a Gramscian perspective, the KWP successfully established a new historic bloc through land reform, as they motivated mutual economic interests between the Party and the underprivileged, the majority of the whole population. In that way, the North Korean citizens

²⁸ The most noteworthy incident indicating the involvement of Protestants was the bombing attacks against Kim Il-Sung and Kang Ryang-Uk at the commemoration of the March First Movement in 1946. According to Kang's biography published in Pyongyang, Kim and Kang escaped from their attacks, but Kang's son and daughter were killed in an attack where some anti-communist Christian clergymen threw a bomb at his house (Lim, 2013). In the interview with me in 2014, Noh Jong Sun stated that this incident was confirmed by testimonies of Protestant defectors from the North.

were assimilated into the communist revolutionary thought aroused by the KWP.

Third, the pro-American Protestants' negative view on the communist ideology with its own fundamentalist dogma failed to gain widespread acceptance in North Korean society. For example, when boycotting the first election, the Joint Presbytery condemned communism as 'Antichrist' or 'devil', and the ballot paper as a 'ticket to hell' (Park, 1980:60). However, using this sort of language from the Bible was not able to form a common sense, in Gramscian terms, where only small minority indicated a Christian identity.

The Protestants' failure of achieving social consensus in North Korean society was clearly reflected in the election. In spite of the Protestants' boycott, the election was successfully held with a 99.6 percent turnout of voters, and 97 percent of successful candidates from the United Front²⁹ (Armstrong, 2003). The result implied that the KWP, with its peasantry and working class-oriented policies, gained the sympathy of a large number of North Korean citizens. Moreover, the election in the North reflected the Korean demographic structure better than that in the South: in the North, the majority of the elected candidates were from the working class and peasantry (81.4 percent), including 13.1 percent of women candidates, while in the South, those who won were mostly intellectuals and wealthy politicians representing a small minority of the privileged class (Armstrong, 2003).

²⁹ For this election at the national level, the KWP agreed on fielding single candidates with the KDP and YFP.

Was There Pro-Communist Protestantism in North Korea?

Another important assertion made by the pro-American Protestants was that ‘all Protestants in North Korea’ were suppressed by the communist regime before the Korean War, on the hypothesis that Communism is incompatible with Christianity. However, this hypothesis should be carefully examined, concerning the Protestant elite who led the revival of Protestantism with the DPRK regime’s approval since 1970s.

In fact, although the relationship between Protestantism and communism in North Korea is often described as a confrontation, both North Korean Protestants and socialists have never unilaterally disapproved of each other. Since decolonisation, Korean Protestantism remained a multitude of disparate groups and denominations with different approaches to the communist regime. While Protestants in Pyong-An were fiercely opposed to communist authority, Protestants in Ham-Kyong, influenced by Canadian Presbyterianism that had relatively flexible and liberal doctrines, showed a positive attitude toward the Communist Party, as Kim Yun-Sung (1994) and Kim Seung-Tae (2000) commonly argued. On the other hand, in Hwang-Hae, there was a long and bitter dispute between pro- and anti-communist Christians in the church community (Shin, 1994).

Although the prominent academic focus on the conflicts between the communists and pro-American Protestants in this period often means that the pro-communist Protestants and their socio-political status tend to be ignored or underestimated, they also formed a considerable religious force accounting for one-third of the Protestant population in North Korea (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Yoo, K., 2004). For example, many Protestant clergy were elected as members of the People’s Committee under the party’s support and their administration in

local governments. In the first election, which the Pyong-An Protestants strongly boycotted, ninety-four, or 2.7 percent, out of a total of 3,459 elected members, were religious believers, most of whom being Protestant clerics (Ryu, 2009). Although this was miniscule in the face of the working class and peasantry (81.6 percent), it was not a small percentage when compared with other professions, such as businessmen (2.1 percent), former landlords (0.4 percent), merchant (4.2 percent), showing that there was considerably sympathy towards the communist regime among the liberal Protestant leaders (Ryu, 2009).

The huge population of pro-communist Protestants appeared on the scene when Kim Il-Sung conceived the idea to establish a new pro-communist Protestant organisation to counter the power of Pyong-An Protestantism, particularly, the Joint Presbytery, branded as Kim's bitter rival. As a consequence, shortly after the first election, the North Korean Christian Association (the NKCA) was established and led by Kang on 28th November 1946. According to his autobiography, It was Kim Il-Sung who asked Kang Ryang-Uk, his mentor and pro-communist Presbyterian clergy 'to found a new Christian organisation aiming to awaken the Korean Christians from their illusion with the American missionaries, and to cultivate them as patriotic believers to participate actively in nation-building' (Kim, I., 1992a:526). In this regard, the NKCA was not voluntarily organised by North Korean Protestants but established with the KWP's support.

Members of the NKCA form a considerable religious force accounting for one-third of the Protestant population in North Korea,³⁰ including a few exceptional Christian in Pyong-An,

³⁰ The NKCA had originally aimed to be an interdenominational Christian institution

half of the Protestants in Hwang-Hae, and the majority of Protestants in Ham-Kyong (Strong, 1949; Kim, H., and Ryu, 2002; Yoo, K., 2004). As far as joining the Association was concerned, defectors from North Korea have argued that most Christians were forced by the KWP to join the NKCA as members (Lee, J., 2011). Also, according to Sawa's research (1997), there seemed to be a sharp disagreement within church communities in Pyong-An and Hwang-Hae on whether to join the NKCA or not, and some non-members in the regions were threatened by state sanctions in their religious activities.

However, Sawa (1997) also found that the situation in Ham-Kyong³¹ was different: without any hostility to the KWP, the local people in this region voluntarily supported the NKCA and the communist social reform. In line with Sawa, Kang In-Choel (1992a) contended that the difference between Ham-Kyong and Pyong-An Protestants was also reflected in the number of Christian defectors from the North to the South: whereas there had been a huge number of defected Christians from Pyong-An before the Korean War, it was rare to find Protestant defectors from Ham-Kyong.³²

In many respects, Ham-Kyong Protestantism was assimilative into Korean Communism. First,

encompassing every Protestant church and even Catholicism, since four North Korean Catholic priests attended the organising committee as representatives of the Catholic Church. However, since the Korean Catholic Church in Seoul declined participating in the NKCA, the NKCA remained a Protestant organisation (Sawa, 1997).

³¹ According to statistics published by the Japanese colonial government in 1937, there were more than 30,000 Protestants, around 340 churches, 296 clergies and 44 western missionaries in Ham-Kyong (Kim, Y., 1994).

³² After the Korean War, when strong antagonism to Christianity was aroused in the North, the defectors from Ham-Kyong to the South dramatically increased.

both shared a common nationalist sentiment. As discussed above, unlike the pro-American Protestants in Pyong-An, they cooperated with the nationalist movements during the colonial period. According to Brouwer (1998), due to its pragmatic approach to ideology rather than a dogmatic approach like American schools, the higher educational institutions established by Canadian Presbyterian Church in Ham-Kyong province were popular among young nationalists, who pursued total reformation of national culture competitive with Japanese imperialism. As other-worldly theology was the prevailing orthodoxy throughout the country with the American missionaries' monopolisation of Christian power, these nationalist Protestants were concerned that a separation of Protestantism from nationalism would mean a loss of their original identity of Korean Protestantism (Kim, Y., 1994).

Ham-Kyong Protestantism's focuses on patriotism-nationalism corresponded with what Kim Il-Sung requested from the religious forces. In his speech before the election, Kim Il-Sung appealed to the religious believers' sense of patriotism and called for their active participation in nation-building:

A religion that prohibits its believers, monks, and clergies from devoting themselves to their own country and people must not exist. [...] Also, religious people who oppose voting in election with the pretext of religious traditions and doctrines are obviously spies bribed by foreign powers to abuse religion for the purpose of state subversion. As long as they are good and patriotic believers, anyone can be elected a member of Committee, and should be so (Kim, I., 1946/1979:519-520).

In this speech, what Kim Il Sung expected from the religious groups was their active participation in the founding of the new state, as shown from the famous statement in a conversation with North Korean workers in 1949: ‘If Korean Christians believe in a God, that God must be Korea’s God’ (Kim, I., 1949/1979:285). By reminding people of the Japanese suppression of religious activities in the colonial period, he asserted that patriotism must be superior to religious belief (Lim, 2013). Prioritising patriotism was also reflected in the first two principles of the NKCA:

1. Members fully cooperate in the nation-building project aiming for full sovereignty and awakening patriotism based on Christian philanthropic doctrines.
2. Members resist the temptations to commit sins against the establishment of democratic Korea, and should act in accordance with moral justice (Lim, 2013; Yoo, K., 2004).

Indeed, NKCA’s nationalist approach was received positively by leftist Christians in the South. In 1948, Korean Christian League for Democracy [*Gidokgyo minju dongmaeng*], the nationalist Protestant group in South Korea led by Kim Chang-Jun, dispatched delegations to Pyongyang. During their visit, delegations met with Kim Il-Sung and Kang Ryang-Uk to discuss the establishment of a unitary government based on nationalism, while the pro-American Protestants espoused the South’s establishment of separate governments based on pro-Americanism.

Second, in Kim's speech and NKCA's principles above, the KWP not only interpreted religion in nationalist terms, but also clarified the extent to which freedom of religion would be guaranteed. Kim Il-Sung never questioned religious faith itself but the religions' stance on social reformation during the nation-building process. Similarly, this spirit of social reformation can be seen in Ham-Kyong Protestants who shared with it anti-feudal and anti-imperialist beliefs. According to Kim Yun-Sung (1994), the pragmatic approach to Christianity stemming from Ham-Kyong indicated two specific aspects. On the one hand, they interpreted their religious activities as the practice of social reformism. They aimed to practice social movements based on Christian faith by solving the poverty issues of the labourers and peasantries. On the other hand, they believed that Heaven was to be realised on Earth. It perceived that God's Kingdom was to be completed and realised on earth, rather than to exist in the other world. Just as Christ spoke of the Good news to the poor, spreading of the gospel had to prioritise saving the poor from socio-economical strains, thereby God's Kingdom would be realised and completed upon this land.

The this-worldly character of Ham-Kyong Protestantism often came into conflict with pro-American conservative-fundamentalism. Joo Jae-Yong (1998) observed Korean progressive Protestantism's challenge to the conservative Protestants in 1930s, led by Ham-Kyong liberalist theologians. In this theological conflict, Kim Choon-Bai, Kim Young-Ju, Song Chang-Keun and Kim Chai-Choon, Korean clergymen whose ministerial background was Ham-Kyong Province, criticised Pyong-An Church's theological position as a legalistic orthodox theology. They laid great emphasis on liberal studies in theology with prophetic historical consciousness. Particularly, in Song Chang-Keun's article entitled *Jesus's View on*

Social Problems, he strove to follow the humility and poverty of Jesus, and claimed that Jesus was 'plebeian and proletariat' (Song, 1978:163). In this regard, during the colonisation, despite being excluded from mainstream Korean Protestantism by the Pyong-An churches that had a hegemonic power, it was clear that these pro-communist Protestants remained steadfast in their own ways of belief.

Furthermore, economically, Ham-Kyong Protestantism was composed of poor labourer or powerless intellectuals back in the colonial period. Through the KWP's revolutionary reform, many landless Christian peasants as well as the majority of farmers who believed in Cheondokyo might even have benefitted unlike the middle-class pro-American Protestants. Kang Ryang-Uk, the pro-communist Presbyterian pastor and chairman of the North Korea Provisional People's Committee (NKPPC), was once quoted saying to Anna Strong, a western journalist, during her 1946 visit to North Korea, that 'some Christians had grievance against the land reform and responded uncooperatively because they used to be generally wealthier than other people' (Strong, 1949).

Through this investigation, we can argue that the ultimate confrontation between the pro-American Protestants and the KWP was concerned neither with different national interests nor religious identity, but class hegemony. In the turmoil of revolutionary change in the social structure, while the middle-class Protestants sought a gradual change in order not to lose their politico-economic position enjoyed during the colonial period, the KWP insisted on radical changes that overturned the class structure descended from the colonial period. In other words, in the process of the KWP's social reform, the downfall of the pro-American

Protestant's leadership was unavoidable.

In fact, the crucial cause of Protestantism's collapse in North Korea was the Korean War, rather than the KWP's suppression of Christians. In their research based on the testimonies from the North Korean people, many scholars, including Kim Heung-Soo, Ryu Dae-Young, Kang In-Cheol, and Ryu Sung-Min, ironically agreed that it was the Christians who suffered the most from the United States entry into the war. The extreme situation of the war inspired pessimist and nihilist views on religion amongst North Korean Protestantism. The US Army's bombardment not only destroyed churches and their theological seminary, but also killed innocent, apolitical people, who had believed that western armies would never attack churches and subsequently hid in churches in churches instead of air-raid shelters³³ (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). With this painful experience fuelling an anti-American atmosphere, antagonism toward Protestantism also reached its climax. It was clear that anti-Americanism caused by the Korean War was extended to anti-Christianity in North Korea. For example, North Korean war orphans, who were temporarily staying in Romania and Poland after the war, brought trouble to the local people, for they destroyed the churches and affronted the local priests. Obviously, these orphans regarded Christianity as 'American' religion (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). At the very least, some believers in North Korea had to conceal their Protestant identity after being confronted with extreme hostility against the United States; many more renounced their faith after the war, or defected to the South with the allied forces (Park, 1980; Kang, 1992a). With the Korean War as a momentum, Christian movements

³³ For example, there was a testimony that around two hundred fifty North Korean Christian people attending a Sunday service in the Second Sinuiju Church were killed immediately by allied bombings (Choi, 2010; Lim, 2013).

including the North Korean Christian Association temporarily disappeared in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula. It was not until 1972 that religious activities in North Korea resurfaced.

Chapter 3.2. The Korean Christian Federation

The investigation in the previous sections into the rival relationship between the KWP and North Korean Protestantism gave two findings: first, the KWP regarded the pro-American Protestants as their political opponents, since their conflict was ultimately characterised as a class struggle for political and economic hegemony between the two leading political forces, rather than for faith or ideology; second, there was a non-negligible population of pro-communist Protestants in North Korea, who inherited a liberal-nationalist theology distinct from the American fundamentalist-conservative belief. Some scholars, such as Kang In-Cheol, Kim Heung-Soo (2002) and Ryu Dae-Young (2002; 2009) argued that pro-American Protestantism was seemingly overthrown in North Korean society because of the Korean War and the social consensus in favour of the masses achieved through economic reform. We can see below the same recognition in Kim Jong-Il's instruction on the film *Choi Hak Shin's Family* in the 1960s:

Regarding religion, we do not have any problem since the Korean War. When it

comes to Christianity, [...] it initially had quite a few believers in the North before the war, but during the war, most churches have been destroyed as well as many believers were killed by the US' indiscriminate bombing. Also, the surviving Christians became even awakened by this experience and did not believe in Jesus any more. Nowadays religious people can hardly be found in the North. [...] Hence, we do not have any religious question to be brought forward (Kim, J., 1966/1992:181).

Nevertheless, the regime suddenly brought them back in North Korean society. Following the Korean Buddhist Federation (KBF in 1973) and Cheondokyo Central Committee (1974), the Korean Christian Federation (KCF in 1974) was finally re-established from its earlier name of the North Korean Christian Association (NKCA), originally founded in 1946 but disappeared shortly after the Korean War, as stated previously (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). These organisations began to speak in official newspapers with statements in support of the liberal movements by religious leaders in the South. Furthermore, each North Korean religious organisation attempted to communicate with international religious organisations, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Christian Peace Conference (CPC), and the World Federation of Buddhists (WFB), all of which mediated between South and North Korea's religious organisations in the end (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Among them, the KCF's activities were exceptionally noticeable. While acknowledging their religious identities, North Korean church leaders were actively involved in dialogue and exchanges with South Korean and international Christian organisations.

Surely, all the activities of those religious organisations which reappeared in the 1970s were

undertaken with the regime's approval. Considering the KWP's antagonism towards Christianity historically, one is bound to ask: why did the KWP re-establish Protestantism on purpose? The answer to this question will correspond to that to the third sub-question of this thesis: why the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism change from the 1970s onwards? This is also to hint at the political purpose behind the regime's tolerance regarding the re-establishment of Protestantism.

With this assumption, this section examines the KCF's activities and structure. As mentioned in the Introductory Chapter, this thesis sees the KCF as an agent of the implicit cultural policy; that is, although the KCF was on the outside a religious organisation belonging to civil society, its activities have been implicitly and inextricably involved in political activities. To illustrate this dual-aspect of the KCF, this section classifies the KCF's activities into two main categories: those that supported citizens' religious life in civil society as a religious institution, and those that cooperated with governmental policies as a political institution. To figure out this, first of all, I will introduce the North Korean elite leadership who had Protestant identities as well as had a close relationship with the political power of the DPRK.

The Emergence of the KCF with Elite Protestants in North Korea

It was in 1972 that the KCF was re-established from the former NKCA. Due to the lack of reference and primary sources, it is difficult to clarify the motivation or process of its re-establishment. Yet, scholars such as Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) argue that some influential figures who were also Protestants would have played a key role in the revival of Protestantism in North Korea.

Since the ceasefire, despite the earlier anti-religious campaigns, there were a few closet religious figures holding important posts in the DPRK's cabinet. For example, Kim Chang-Jun, a Presbyterian minister, was appointed vice-chairman of the Supreme People's Assembly, and was buried in the Graves of the Revolutionary Martyrs (the North Korean national cemetery) after his death (Choi, 2012). Choi Yong-Gun, a faithful Christian and Kim Il-Sung's comrade since the liberation movement in Manchuria, filled several important posts in cabinet including the Vice President (Armstrong, 2003). According to Yoo Kwan-Ji (2004), these leaders shared the following characteristics. First, their religious identities were inherited through the family since the colonial period. Second, they belonged to the powerful elite class in the DPRK with their contribution to consolidating Kim Il-Sung's position. As we saw in the previous section, there were certainly pro-communist Protestants in North Korea before the Korean War.

Among them, Kang Ryang-Uk was the most outstanding Protestant figure in North Korean history. As the founder and first chairman of the Central Committee of the KCF, no complete account of the KCF is possible without mentioning him. According to his biography written by Lim Yi-Cheol (2013), North Korean author, Kang was the second cousin of Kim Il-Sung's maternal grandfather as well as Kim's elementary school teacher. When Kang was forty, he was ordained as a Presbyterian clergy after graduating from the Pyongyang Seminary. Considering their blood connection and teacher-pupil relation from a Korean Confucian perspective, we can presume that Kim Il-Sung could hardly ignore Kang's prestigious status.

Lim Yi-Cheol (2013) continued to explain that it was Kim Il-Sung who summoned Kang

shortly after decolonisation and gave a task to mobilise Protestants for the socialist construction project (Lim, 2013). However, even during the disappearance of Christianity in North Korea after the Korean War, Kang's political status remained undiminished. After holding various public positions, Kang eventually became the powerful authority next to Kim Il-Sung, as he became elected as the Vice-President of the DPRK in 1972 and 1983. In the North-South Korean Red Cross conference held in Pyongyang in 1972, Kang was questioned by South Korean journalists about the religious situation in North Korea. It was the first official comment on the North Korean religious situation by a North Korean politician:

All the churches in North Korea were destroyed by the US army during the Korean War. Many North Korean people renounced their faith because of what the American Christian armies did to this country during the war. Therefore, it is difficult to figure out how many Christians still remain in North Korea. There are possibly some believers in certain regions (1972, quoted in Yoo, K., 2004:34)

What is interesting in this comment, Kang's suggestion that the presence of religious citizens was still possible in North Korea. However, more impressive comment in this interview was the one on Kang's religious identity. When he was asked about his religious identity, he introduced himself as a Protestant minister believing in God just the same as before (Yoo, K., 2004). Given that these questions were quite unexpected, we can argue that his answers were not based on any political calculation, but an expression of his own Protestant pride. Also, as a high-ranking official, Kang's statement challenged the common sense widely assumed in capitalist societies including South Korea, that every North Korean Protestant was suppressed

by the North Korean communist regime. Rather, his presence suggested that there were more powerful elites like him who could maintain their religious identities in the communist regime.

Besides Kang Ryang-Uk, we could see the political elite leadership who led the re-establishment of the KCF, many of whom were composed of high-level officials in the government as below:

Table 4: Political & Administrative Roles Held by the KCF's Staff
(Source: Baik, 1998)

Name	Positions in Social or Political Structures
Kang Ryang-Uk	Chairman of the Korean Democratic Party (1959), Vice-President (1972, 1984)
Kang Young-Seop	Supreme Court Justice, The DPRK's Ambassador to Malta, The DPRK's Ambassador to Romania (1969-73), Member of the Supreme People's Assembly (1990-2012),
Ko Ki-Jun	Head of the Organisational Department of the Korean Democratic Party (1958), Member of the Supreme People's Assembly (1990)
Ko Hak-Jin	Executive of the Korean Democratic Party (1993)
Kim Deuk-Ryong	Vice Chairman of the Korean Democratic Party (1981)
Kim Seong-Ryul	Central Committee of the Korean Democratic Party (1945), Member of the Supreme People's Assembly (1948, 1962), North Korean Representative of the North-South Red Cross Conference (1972), Member of the Direction Committee of the Pyongyang Economic Development (1987)
Ryeom Kuk-Ryeol	Vice Chairman of the Central Committee of Korean Democratic Party (1981), Member of the National Election Commission (1982), Member of the Supreme People's Assembly (1982)
Lee Seong-Bong	Vice Chairman of the People's Committee in Kangwon

According to this table, the both KCF's Chairman and Vice-Chairman were representatives in the Supreme People's Assembly, the primary legislative body of the DPRK. All of members

in this table were also baptised or ordained as ministers before the Korean War. Besides, Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) found that around ninety lay Christians were also involved in the Regional People's Congress in 1987.

Another remarkable feature related to the original committee members of the KCF was the clergy from Ham-Kyong Province, who had supported Kim Il-Sung and the KWP before the Korean War. Although the KCF has been rather reticent and does not provide much information on actual members, we still can see from the following table that many original Protestant members from Ham-Kyong were assigned to key positions in the KCF in Pyongyang as follows:

Table 5: the KCF members came from Ham-Kyong Province
(Source: Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Yoo, K., 2004; Choi, 2013)

Name	Position	The Native Place
Lee Seong Bong ³⁴	Minister in charge of the Bongsu Church	Chung-Jin city, the North Ham-kyong
Park Chun Keun	Minister in charge of the Chilgol Church	U-Rang gun, the South Ham-kyong
Lee Chun Min	Chief secretary of the KCF	Longjing, ³⁵ China
Um Young Seon	Head of International Department of the KCF	The South Ham-kyong

The background of these committee members also reveals how the KCF was composed of qualified Christians ordained genuinely before the Korean War.

³⁴ Lee Seong-Bong was a Methodist minister ordained from Do In Kwon, a famous nationalist minister during the colonial period.

³⁵ Longjing is a city in Yanbian Korean Autonomous Prefecture. Most of local citizens came from Ham-Kyong province during the colonial period.

The KCF as an Ecclesiastical Organisation

Ever since the KCF became officially known to international society in 1972, their several projects to re-establish the ecclesiastical form were also reported from multiple visitors and WCC members in Pyongyang. Based on these reports published by the WCC and the NCCCK, this thesis illustrates the form of North Korean Protestantism. This illustration will show why the WCC and the NCCCK approved the religious authenticity of the KCF after investigations, which led to the exchanges between the KCF, the WCC and the NCCCK. In other words, for the WCC and the NCCCK, the cooperation with the KCF was grounded on the belief that they shared a common Protestant identity.

a) The Registration of House Churches

As the first project for reconstructing the ecclesiastical order, the Central Committee of the KCF undertook a survey of the Christian population in North Korea in 1972 (Baik, 1998; Kim [et al.], 1993). Since the ceasefire, the DPRK regime did not have exact statistics of how many Christians remained in North Korea. According to the KCF members' explanation, due to the anti-religious campaign, the strong hostility to Christianity in the society, many Christians avoided revealing their religious identities (Weingartner, 1987, quoted in Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Furthermore, in the absence of pastors, they could not even conceive of the idea of rebuilding a church, but carried on their religious lives in the houses of lay leaders. These Christian gatherings were called 'house churches [*Kajeong gyohoe*].' When WCC members were visiting Pyongyang in the late 1980s, the KCF members confessed that the state suppressed these house churches during the anti-religious campaign from the 1960s to the early 1970s, and these believers secretly continued their religious activities in the form of

underground churches in this period (Weingartner, 1987, quoted in Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002).

However, from 1972 onwards, the underground Christian communities started to come out into the open under the protection of the KCF, as the KCF began to investigate these house churches while encouraging hidden Christian individuals to register with the KCF (NCKK, 1987b).³⁶ According to the KCF's survey reported to the WCC, around five hundred house churches were registered with the KCF until 1984, which were voluntarily organised by about fifteen thousand local believers scattered all over the country under the control of city or local federations (NCKK, 1987b). Multiple visitors to Pyongyang from South Korea or other countries between the 1980s and 2000s have reported in common that each house church in Pyongyang, Ham-Heung and Wonsan would hold regular services with ten to fifteen Protestant believers once a week and have an official meeting once a month to perform instruction from the KCF (NCKK, 1987b). The average age of Protestants in North Korea was fifty-five years old, and seventy percent of them were women (NCKK, 1987b).

The following table shows the approximate numbers of Protestants and house churches in North Korea based on various references. Particularly, in terms of Christian population, the KCF has begun providing the exact numbers of Protestants based on the completed survey since the twenty-first century, whereas information between the 1960s and 1990s were but estimated figures. Although the figures were approximate, we can still see the gradual increase in the number of North Korean Protestants.

³⁶ At that moment, according to the KCF, they surveyed both populations of Protestantism and Catholicism because there was no organisation for the Catholics. It was 1988 when the [North] Korean Catholic Association was organised (NCKK, 1987b).

Table 6: Distribution of Protestants in North Korea between 1960s and 2002
(Source: Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Keum, 2002)

Year	Number of House Churches	Number of Christians	Number of Pastors and Lay Leaders
1960s	House Churches: 200 (estimated)		
1970s	House Churches: 100 (estimated)		
1977		‘Thousands’	
1979	House Churches: 30 (in Pyongyang)		
1980		Protestants:800 (in Pyongyang)	
1981	House Churches: 500 (Pyongyang: 60)	5,000	
1984		Protestants:5,000	
1985	House Churches in Pyongyang: 30-40	Protestants:10000 Catholics: 800	Pastors: 30 Lay leaders & church elders: 200
1986	House Churches: 500	Protestants:10,000	Pastors: 30 Lay leaders & church elders: 200
1987	House Churches: 500	Protestants:10,000 Catholics: 700	Pastors: 20 Lay leaders & church elders: 300
1988		10,000	
1996		12,000	Pastors: 20 Lay leaders & church elders :200
2000		12,343	
2002		13,043	

The gradual increase of Christian population and house churches in this table does not indicate the expansion of North Korea’s Christian community by missionary, it only reveals hidden believers. Related to this, in his interview for this thesis in 2013, Noh Jung-Sun, a

South Korean minister who visited Pyongyang several times as Vice-Chairman of the NCKK, said that in the beginning of the survey, members of house churches seemed to be reluctant to cooperate with the KCF. Most Christians had not been informed of the re-foundation of the federation, and the anti-religious campaign still had effect on the underground Christian society at the time when the KCF was beginning to discover them.

According to the table, we can argue that it was not until 1984 that the hidden believers and the KCF have eventually forged mutual trust and the majority of churches have joined. In 2002, a KCF member said to Na Haek-Jip, Korean-American Protestant minister who visited the Pyongyang Seminary, the KCF launched a new evangelism campaign, with the aim of increasing membership to 14,000 by 2004 (Na, 2005). However, this campaign was totally different from missionary work in capitalist society, in the sense that their main task was still focused on discovering existing Protestants rather than converting new people to Protestantism. For this reason, membership of the KCF was generally composed of already existing Protestants (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002).

As the smallest units within the federation, scholars such as Kim Heung-Soo and Baik-Joong Hyun regarded the house churches as the most unique and genuine elements in the KCF's structure, for they were developed by grass-root Christians who maintained their religious faith before the revival of the KCF (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Baik, 1998). Also, their lay people-centred characteristics established from a bottom-up approach allows us to define them as public Christian communities in North Korea (Baik, 1998). As the KCF protected their activities as well as dispatched ordained pastors to the communities, these house

churches were revived and even strengthened.

b) The Pyongyang Seminary

Following the survey of Christian population, the KCF's next project was to reopen the seminary, which was closed during the war. This project was led by Kang Ryang-Uk, and the teaching staffs were composed of aged Protestant ministers, some of whom were also administrative authorities in the regime (NCCCK, 1987b).

Before the reopening of the theological seminary in 1972, Protestant activities in general were almost impossible due to the lack of clergy. A great number of clergymen died during the war or evacuated to the South, and there was no theological education in North Korea between the war and 1972. Thus, when the KCF was re-founded, there were only ten old ministers who had been ordained before the war (Na, 2005). According to the WCC investigation in 1989, before producing the first batch of Protestant clergy from the seminary in 1974, Communion – which only ordained clergy could conduct – was generally held only twice a year at Easter and at Christmas (NCCUSA, 1989, quoted in Keum, 2002).³⁷ In terms of maintaining religious activities, training new pastors was a more urgent task than establishing new churches. In this situation, the reopening of the Pyongyang Seminary did not aim for theological research, but for training authorised pastors who could conduct formal religious ceremonies and activities.

The Pyongyang Seminary offered a three-year course for a Bachelor of Divinity in the

³⁷ On these occasions, several local congregations would come together (Baik, 1998).

beginning, but since 2000 it has changed to a five-year course (Choi, 2012). Every five years and only after the previous students' graduation could new students enrol for a quota of about ten. After graduation, these students were dispatched to house churches for conducting services. According to a report from the KCF to the WCC, thirty-seven graduates from the theologian school have been ordained and served in house churches by 1989 (NCCK, 1987b). Also, by 1995, seventy students have graduated from the seminary (NCCK, 1987b). In 1997, the KCF reported to the WCC that fifty-two students have been ordained and the others were undergoing pastoral training in their placement (WCC, 1997, quoted in Baik, 1998).

Fifteen years later, Choi Jae-Young (2012), the Korean-American Protestant clergyman and the recent visitor at the Pyongyang Seminary in 2012, reported that there were twenty to thirty pastors in North Korea, and twelve seminary students at the school. Although the figure was still low, it is certain that the reopening of the seminary gave rise to fundamental change in the religious terrain of North Korea. As a result of restarting theological education, house churches had more opportunities of having ordained pastors to minister to them, thus becoming more stable and active. At the same time, through dispatching pastors, the KCF could effectively manage the house churches scattered all over the main cities.

c) The Publication of the Bible and Hymnbook

The Bible in North Korea means more than religion; it symbolises the US, a 'sworn enemy' (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). In the Sincheon Massacre Memorial Museum, a place for commemorating the Sincheon locals killed by the US army during the Korean War, several worn Bible books and Christian hymnbooks are exhibited as the symbol of the enemy – the

US (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Choi, 2012). Based on this tragic history, as a rule, it is known outside the DPRK that carrying or possessing the Bible is illegal in North Korea.

However, this is not absolutely correct. Nowadays there are a limited number of places where reading the Bible or hymnbooks is permitted: the churches in Pyongyang, the Pyongyang Seminary, and other house churches on Sunday (Baik, 1998). Many South Korean and western Protestants, who visited house churches in Pyongyang, saw a few North Korean Christians reading the Bibles brought from their home (NCKK, 1987b; Ryu, 1999). Also, Baik Joong-Hyun, a South Korean Journalist who visited several times, witnessed a few North Korean Christians reading the Bible in Bongsu Church before a service (Baik, 1998). According to the interview with Eric Weingartner in 2014, in North Korea, ‘trouble with the Bible arises only when it is published outside of the DPRK, particularly, in South Korea.’ In other words, the Bible was indeed published in the DPRK.

Before the re-establishment of the KCF, the Bible and hymnbooks had not been in print since the establishment of the socialist regime, and only a few copies of the Bible survived during the anti-religious campaign. Also, the old language used in the old Bible was not appropriate in modern Korean language. In response to this, since the 1970s, the KCF has prepared the publication of a new Korean Bible and a hymnbook, resulting in the publication of the New Testament in 1983 and the Old Testament in 1984 (NCKK, 1987b; 1988b; Baik, 1998). According to a member of the KCF, the KCF members donated two percent of their monthly income to the KCF for contributing to publication costs. Thanks to their donation, the KCF printed 10,000 copies of the complete Bible as well as 10,000 copies of the new hymnbook in

1984 (NCKK, 1987b; 1988b; Baik, 1998). However, by 1987 there were no original copies left, since the number of Protestants recorded by the KCF has already reached 10,000. Consequently, the KCF reprinted the Bible and the hymnbook in 1990 (NCKK, 1987b; 1988b). This shows there was demand for these sacred texts among Protestant believers in North Korea.

d) The Establishment of Protestant Churches

The KCF's activities reached their peak in 1988 when the Bongsu Church was established in Pyongyang, which had four-hundred members. Following the Bongsu Church, in 1991, the KCF established the second Protestant church in Pyongyang, named the Chilgol Church, in memory of Deacon Kang Ban-Suk, the mother of Kim Il-Sung. These two western-style churches eventually led to a fundamental change in the pattern of religious activities. With the reappearance of churches, a new congregational model also began to emerge in North Korea. For instance, senior and associate pastors were appointed, church elders were elected, and choirs were organised, whose members belonged to the urban elite of Pyongyang (Baik, 1998). These reforms imply that the KCF's main interest has changed from protecting individual faith to organising collective bodies.

As such, the reopening of the Seminary, the publication of the new Bible and hymnbook, and the establishment of western-style churches were symbolic events for the revival of Christianity. Conservative-fundamentalist Protestants in South Korea and in the US have disparaged these activities as manipulative and deceitful. However, circumstantial evidence indicated that the KCF's attempt to re-construct the ecclesiastical order was not to be

dismissed so easily, as two essential requirements for Christian activities – the Bible and clergy – were then successfully fulfilled.

Furthermore, it can be observed that the KCF did make an effort to consult the believers' opinion in the process of reconstructing. For if they intended to deceive the international community into believing that the DPRK regime protected religious freedom, it would not have been necessary to publish the revised edition of the Bible. However, according to the NCCK, the KCF even requested a copy of the South Korean Bible to be sent by the NCCK to Pyongyang in 1983, for the purpose of consulting the more modern vocabulary for the revision of the North Korean Bible (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). This led to some very similar translated sentences appearing in both South Korean and North Korean Bibles. Also, three Christian churches – two Protestant and one Catholic – in Pyongyang were the only public places that people could not see their Supreme Leaders' pictures on the wall, and Christians also did not need to wear the badge of Supreme leader with the government's approval. Although such a policy seemingly aimed to avoid unnecessary conflicts with western or South Korean Churches, it also hinted at the regime's tolerance to the churches' autonomy belonging to, in Gramscian terms, civil society.

The Political-Economic Status of North Korean Protestants

A serious question remains concerning the KCF's status within North Korean society: who was involved in North Korean Protestantism under the KCF's protection? Despite the support from the government, the KCF's religious activities within North Korea were hampered by a variety of restrictions. Most significantly, missionary work was legally impossible because

religious activities were allowed only within the church. For this reason, Protestant identity in North Korea was mostly handed down through family members. However, in spite of having Protestant parents, young people under sixteen were still not allowed to go to church because they were considered too immature to make a judgement (Choi, 2012).

Furthermore, with the Party's agenda supporting the Juche idea, the national ideology and atheism in principle, religious believers were bound to be discriminated against. According to Yoo Kwan-Ji's research on the KCF committee (2004), all the committee members belonged politically to the KDP, an allied party to the KWP, rather than to the KWP itself. It was perhaps a requirement that a KWP member – the sign of eminent success in North Korea – could not hold personal religious beliefs. Yoo Kwan-Ji's research was underpinned by Choi Jae-Young's testimony; when visiting Pyongyang in 2013, he heard from Son Hyo-Soon, a minister in charge of Bongsu Church, that young people who had Christian parents were particularly wary of inheriting their parents' religious identity (Choi, 2012).

Moreover, the KCF's activities were less visible within North Korea than in the international scene. In the interview with Weingarnter in 2014, although there are now the two churches in Pyongyang, most North Korean people, particularly those living in rural areas, did not know about the KCF, since the KCF was re-organised without any official announcement. In fact, the KCF's activities reached only big cities while Christians in other small cities and remote regions near the border with China were left unattended. According to Choi Myong-Kuk's research (2004), Protestant scholars who communicated with the KCF, there are around 150 authorised house churches in big six cities, Pyongyang, Ham-Heung, Nampo, Sinuiju,

Gaesung and Wonsan, 60 house churches in small towns in South Pyong-An Province, and 40 churches in other province. However, there is no house church in remote mountain areas like Yang-gang Province or Jagang Province. Related to this, Weingartner, in an interview for this thesis in 2014, explained that it was not only because of the KCF's finite resources but because of the loosened government control over the whole territory caused by the natural disaster since 1990s.

On the other hand, in my opinion, the concentration of Protestant populations in urban areas reveals the class composition of North Korean Protestants. As mentioned in the Introductory Chapter, North Korean citizens are obliged to obtain government permission for their residence in each region, and urban dwellers are mostly perceived as the privileged in the country. Considering such conditions, we can cautiously infer that North Korean Protestantism is a closed urban-elite community. In other words, only the middle-class people, whose political-economic stances were relatively higher (but lower than the Party members), can lead their religious lives under the KCF's protection if they inherited religious identity from their ancestors.

Why the DPRK revived the Protestant Organisation?

From a Protestant perspective, in which evangelisation through missionary works can be a key objective, the KCF's exclusiveness is hard to understand. It is also hard to believe that the DPRK regime approved the re-establishment of the KCF for the small minority of North Korean Protestants only. With respect to this, Kim Heung-Soo (2002), Dyu Dae-Young (2002; 2009), and Ryu Sung-Min (1999) contended that the KCF's role mainly focused on the non-

governmental diplomacy rather than domestic religious activities. This character of the KCF was also noticed in its Principle announced in 1972:

Table 7: A Comparison between the Principles of the NKCA (1946) and the KCF (1972)
(Source: Kim, H., 1992; Baik, 1998)

Principles of the KCF (1972)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With patriotism, the KCF will make efforts for the prosperity of the country by upholding the constitution and the policy of the Republic government. 2. The KCF will strive to eliminate all kinds of discrimination based on gender, nation, religion, property and class, and to establish a free, equal society founded on the spirit of Christian charity. 3. The KCF will work to defend the freedom of faith and religious life for the development of Christianity in the DPRK, including work for evangelism, and the rights and demands of Christians. 4. The KCF will love the nation, and form a friendship with all the patriotic democratic parties and social organisations. The KCF will cooperate with them toward national reunification. 5. Following the DPRK's independent unification policy, the KCF will strive against imperialism and its followers who instigate the permanent national-territorial division. 6. The KCF will respect national sovereignty, and will promote love for peace and justice. The KCF will reinforce friendship and solidarity with people from all levels of society in the world. The KCF will respect all activities for the enduring peace of the world and the pursuit of happiness.

In the 1972 Principles, we can see that the dominant aspect expressed in the above aims was the patriotic-nationalist value, which represents political, rather than religious concerns. Principle 4 and 5 showed the possibility of a united front with South Korean anti-government

Protestant movements and Principle 6 stressed international friendship and solidarity. Alongside these principles, to demonstrate the DPRK's changes in the attitude towards Protestantism and the actual role of the KCF, it is important to examine the KCF's political position within North Korean society as well as the international circumstance.

a) Pressure from the International Community

When explaining the reason for DPRK's changes in the attitude toward Protestant activities since 1970s, many scholars paid attention to the changes in international circumstances surrounding the Korean Peninsula. In the slightly relaxed Cold War atmosphere following Nixon's visit to China, as Armstrong (2013b) noticed, the DPRK regime attempted outward expansion in the early 1970s, breaking the regime's 'nonaligned' principle to which the regime had adhered in the previous decades. In this period, the DPRK regime sought to build up new economic and political ties to advanced capitalist countries, while maintaining a good relationship with the Soviet Union, China, and other third-world countries (Armstrong, 2013b). Also, the DPRK joined various UN bodies as well as lobbied at the UN General Assembly. The influence of the changes in the international circumstances on the DPRK's policy will be further analysed in Chapter Five.

As its contacts with the capitalist countries increased, the DPRK regime was frequently questioned on the freedom of religion. In fact, the KCF was required to invite western Protestants to Pyongyang for the field investigation when attempting to establish contact with the international ecumenical organisations. For example, Philip Porter, a former General Secretary of the WCC, sent a letter to the KCF in 1975 as follows:

[...] We would very much appreciate having the opportunity for more information about the life and witness of the churches in your country and for direct contacts with you, and with churches and Christian groups there. [...] We shall also be happy to explore the possibility of a visit by representatives of some member churches of the WCC to your country to establish firsthand contacts with your churches (Potter, 1975).

Also, in 1976, Alan Brash, a former Deputy General Secretary of the WCC, sent a letter to Ambassador Extraordinary of the DPRK in Geneva to urge them to provide information on the Christian activities in North Korea:

[...] [W]e are therefore concerned to know what is the situation of the Christian churches still remaining in your country. We also want to take seriously the fact that you communicated to us their desire to relate to the World Council and we remind you of your request that we should be enabled to visit these Christian groups to join with them in Christian activities at some appropriate time (Brash, 1976).

Through these official documents, we could argue that, facing international pressure to approve religious activities, some North Korean political leaders encouraged the regime to revive Christianity.

Furthermore, Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) put forward their argument that

two Protestant Churches in Pyongyang, the Bongsu Church and the Chilgol Church, were the products of the pressure from the international society. They pointed out that the Bongsu Church was established not for the local people, but for the display to South Korean and foreign churches, which often considered the presence of churches as a symbol of religious freedom.

It seems that the KCF had been preparing for the establishment of new churches since the mid-1980s. Interestingly, these churches were erected not because of the local people's demand. The need for establishing churches was acknowledged by the KCF because South Korean and foreign churches increasingly demanded it. However, for North Korea Christians, an official church building was not their concern because they were already accustomed to their own way of religious activities in house churches (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002:156).

According to the WCC's report after visiting Pyongyang in 1985, North Korean Christians declined the KCF's suggestion of establishing a new church (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). The local Christians did not feel any inconvenience without a church building; furthermore, considering the average age of North Korean Christians, which was over fifty (Baik, 1998), it would cause them more inconvenience to go to church faraway. Also, the North Korean Christians have already habituated themselves to house churches, which were small but provided a casual and friendly atmosphere like a neighbourhood meeting. In his interview, Weingartner in 2014 also expressed similar opinion to Kim Heung-Soo with his personal experience in North Korea. During his stay in Pyongyang to conduct the World Food Programme between 1997 and 1999, he and some members of the WCC met some North

Korean Christians in a house church in Pyongyang. When he asked why they were still maintaining a small house church instead of going to the Bongsu or Chilgol Church, these North Korean Christians replied that they preferred their small house church where their close fellowship could be preserved:

At the beginning when the Bongsu Church was built, they were all encouraged to become members. In fact, they were very happy to have a big church, they were allowed to go to church, and they joined. However, they realised that it was not the right place for them. They were not used to having worship in such a big setting, and they were too shy to talk to other people. They missed the more intimate communities they had. So, this little group decided to leave the Bongsu Church, and go back to having their house church (Weingartner, 2014).

Ironically, then, it seems that the Bongsu and Chilgol Churches were the KCF's most political but least religious achievement, in order to meet the demands from outside North Korea. Indeed, their political indication was also implied in the second report of the National Council of Church USA (The NCCUSA) upon their visit to Pyongyang. According to this report, the establishment of the churches in Pyongyang was required not by the KCF but by the DPRK government (NCKK, 1988b). For this project, the government provided land and construction materials free of charge, and the rest of the costs were covered by the support from South Korean and other foreign churches as well as donations by local Christians. In fact, 1988 saw some fundamental changes in the North Korean religious sphere. Apart from the completion of the Bongsu Church, the [North] Korean Catholic Association was

organised shortly after the establishment of the Jangchung Catholic Church in the same year. Also, the North Korean Buddhist Federation began to hold public ceremonies according to the Buddhist calendar.

There have been various speculations on the reason for the coincidence of several religious achievements, but arguably one of the most convincing explanations is that these changes were in preparation for the World Festival of Youth and Students held in Pyongyang in 1989. In light of the international event, the regime would have encouraged religious groups to seek tangible achievements to build an outward appearance of religion required for national branding (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). We can draw two inferences from this discussion: first, the two Protestant churches were established in pursuit of the regime's political advantage in the international community; second, international interest in North Korea's religious freedom contributed to the change in the religious sphere of the country.

b) Formation of the United Front with Anti-ROK overseas and South Korean Protestants

It was observed that the DPRK's re-establishment of a Protestant organisation was, initially, a project linked to anti-South Korea operations rather than to domestic religious policy. Due to the changed atmosphere of the Cold War, there were apparent changes in the DPRK's attitude towards South Korea as well. The DPRK actively sought inter-Korean rapprochement by holding the North-South [Korean] Red Cross conference, and by signing the joint communiqué with South Korea in 1972, based on an agreement on efforts toward peaceful national reunification by overcoming differences in the ideological and political systems. However, behind the curtain, the DPRK still secretly assisted anti-government movements

against Park Jung-Hee's dictatorship in South Korea. At that time, the DPRK was attracted by South Korean activists, mostly dissidents against the military dictatorship in South Korea as well as US imperialism, who were making an effort on national reunification.

Significantly, there were a great number of Christian dissidents in South Korea involved in national reunification and pro-democracy movements under Park's dictatorship in the South. Unlike former governments – e.g. the US military administration and the Syngman Rhee regime – which privileged Christianity but discriminated against Buddhism, Confucianism and traditional Korean folk beliefs, Park Jung Hee's regime was technically the first to put the principle of laicity into practice, separating religion and the state while maintaining neutrality among religions (Baik, 2014). Distanced from the central political power, South Korean Christianity (both Catholicism and Protestantism) broke away from their pro-government tendency and actively participated in the reunification and democratic civil society movement. Also, some South Korean Christians immigrated to the US or western Europe to escape from Park's dictatorial power.

The emergence of a Christian anti-ROK movement at home and abroad was followed by a change in the KWP's understanding of Korean Christianity, from a cultural means of imperial invasion to a political co-operator with the DPRK against the US and the ROK governments. This can be glimpsed from an official letter from the KCF to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in February 1972, which was the very first appearance of the KCF on the international stage, and in which they asked for support for the Christian pro-democracy movement in South Korea, demonstrating how South Korean Christians and students suffered

from the regime's suppression:

[...] We believe you are well aware of the fact that the present authorities of South Korea since their usurpation of power through military coup has been brutally persecuting patriots, students, and religious people who stand for liberty, democracy and peaceful situation prevailing in South Korea, [and] are raising their voices denouncing the South Korean fascist clique. We should like to express our expectation that with deep understanding of our letter you will raise your voice in [the] denunciation of the brutal fascist repression by the South Korean authorities and continue to active[ly] support and encourage the righteous struggle of the masses of the people including [the] religious people in South Korea as you have [been] supporting our people's struggle for national reunification (WCC, 1974, quoted in Kim, H., 2003b:13-14).

This letter showed not only the official revival of Christian groups in North Korea isolated from the international Christian community but also the political purpose of their approach to the WCC.

In fact, the DPRK paid sharp attention to the South Korean Christian forces which led anti-government movements since the 1970s. Apart from the KCF's letter to the WCC, *Rodong Sinmun*, the KWP's bulletin, consistently ran features on the Christian pro-democracy movements against Park's dictatorship in South Korea. Furthermore, in a North Korean academic article entitled *The Theory of Revolutionisation of South Korean and National*

Unification Based on the Juche Idea (1975) written by Heo Jong-Ho, the North Korean theorist, we can see to what extent the DPRK regarded South Korean religious believers and organisations as partners for a united front. With the description of religious circumstances in South Korea, where around 17,950,000 religious people existed and a considerable figure of them were against ‘their [South Korean] pro-American military-fascist regime’, Heo underlined that the DPRK policy should aim to embrace these believers of religion, including Christians, who conform to the nationalist independent movement against the US, for a common political purpose (Heo, 1975:112-114). Similarly, Bae Myeong Hee, a North Korean historian, published an article in *History of Science [Ryeoksagwahak]*, a North Korean academic journal, presenting a linkage between reunification movements organised by the South Korean religious leadership and the Juche idea, in terms of their anti-American and nationalist aspects (Bae, 1989).

Also, the testimony of Hong Dong-Keun, a Korean-American Protestant clergy, underpinned Kim Heung-Soo’s argument: when he visited Pyongyang as a visiting professor at the Kim Il Sung University to teach introductory courses on Christian studies in the 1980s, Yun Gi-Bok, Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland in the DPRK, told him that ‘learning Christianity is necessary for dialogues with South Korea’ (Hong, 1989, quoted in Kang, 1992a:249). Here Yun also stated that the North Korean people were aware of Christianity in a different way from the past, for many South Korean and overseas Korean Protestants were actively involved in the reunification as well as anti-American movements (Kang, 1992a).

Changes in the North Korean perception of South Korean Protestantism were not limited to the academia or politics. The *Chollima*, a popular cultural magazine for the labourers in North Korea, introduced a series of non-fiction articles that dealt with Moon Ik-Hwan's visit to Pyongyang from July to November of 1996. Moon Ik Hwan was a South Korean nationalist Protestant leader who illegally visited Pyongyang in 1989 with an invitation from Kim Il-Sung, and led the service in the Bongsu Church. In its articles *Chollima* particularly focused on Moon's Protestant identity combined with his nationalist thought that his religious calling was to contribute to the national reunification.

In this sense, upon realising that liberal Christian leaders spearheaded the anti-government and anti-American movements in South Korea, Pyongyang seemed to have reconsidered South Korean churches as potential comrades for a united front against the US and South Korean governments, and to have decided to re-establish the KCF for Protestant communication between the North and the South as an important vehicle for inter-Korean political affiliation, which would lead to an advantageous position for the DPRK.

The KCF as Political Propaganda Organisation

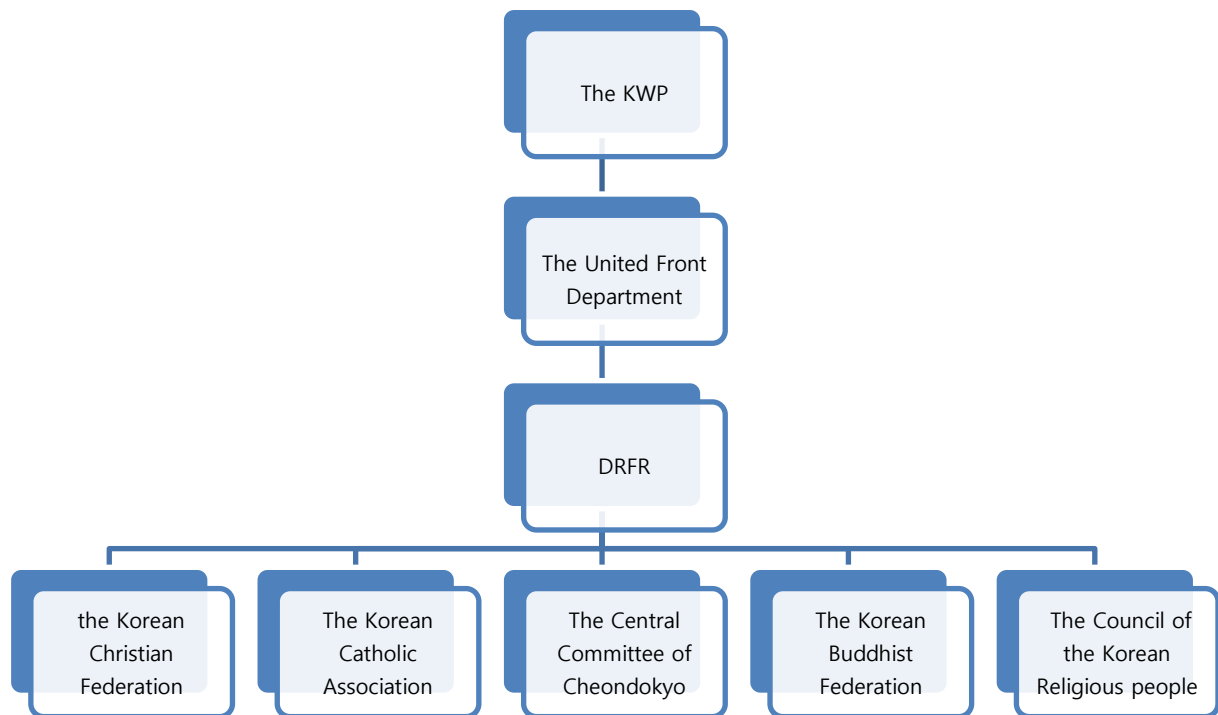
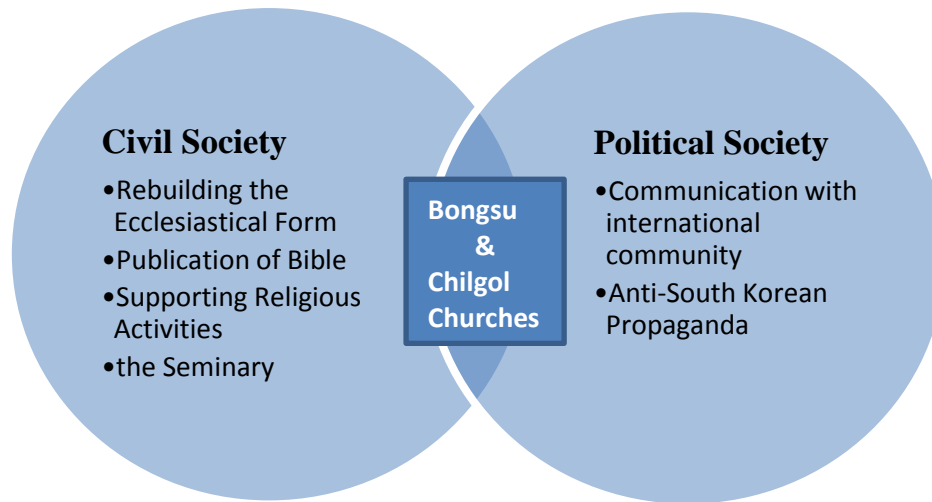


Chart 1: The Political Power Structure in the North Korean Religious Organisations
(Source: Namgung, 2001)

The assumption that the KCF aimed for a united front with the South Korean anti-government movements is underpinned by the KCF's status in the DPRK regime; the KCF was one of the organisations subordinate to the Democratic Front for the Reunification of the Fatherland (DFRF), an extra-governmental body for anti-ROK (South Korea) operations. The DERF was in turn under the control of the United Front Department within the KWP, which aimed to construct cooperative relationships with various social organisations in South Korea in order to isolate the 'US imperial army and anti-revolutionary power' (Kim, H., 1992:37). This hierarchical structure clearly exposed the implicit but close-knit relationship between the KCF and the KWP. Due to the fact that the KCF is subordinate to a department in the KWP, many conservative scholars were suspicious of the KCF's religious genuineness.

Diagram 1: The Category of Roles of the KCF in Gramscian terms

(Source: Gramsci, 1971; Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Ryu, 1999; Keum, 2002, Namgung, 2001)



Nevertheless, in my opinion, the political aspect of the KCF does not imply that it is a pseudo-religious organisation. As Gramsci argued, historically, even religion could form a total social praxis in association with a political movement. As discussed in the first section of this chapter, the so-called common sense that ‘religion ought to be apolitical’ was propagated by the American conservative-fundamentalist Protestantism, which stirred up a backlash from the liberal-nationalist Church during the colonial period and the nation-building process. Furthermore, the establishment of a proper ecclesiastical form – with ordained clergy, genuine believers, and the Bible – was essential for the KCF, if it was to justify its genuineness of religious identity, and to communicate with foreign as well as South Korean Christian churches.

Furthermore, in the process of re-establishing the KCF, the DPRK regime also changed the Constitutions, legal regulations, and definitions of official dictionaries on religion.

Originally, these indicated a strong hostility toward Protestantism but they were altered to reflect positive attitudes towards Protestantism when the KCF's activities were exposed to international scrutiny. This transformation will be explored in the next section.

Chapter 3.3. The Legal Regulation on Religion in the DPRK

As an extended research on the changes in DPRK's policies toward North Korean Protestantism, this section examines the shift in the constitutional and legal regulations on religion in the DPRK, which were the ground rules for the KCF. This examination is helpful for understanding to what extent the DPRK regime guaranteed freedom of Protestant activities within its legal system. In other words, in what ways the coercive measures of political society (legal regulations) restricted autonomy of civil society (freedom of religion) in Gramscian terms.

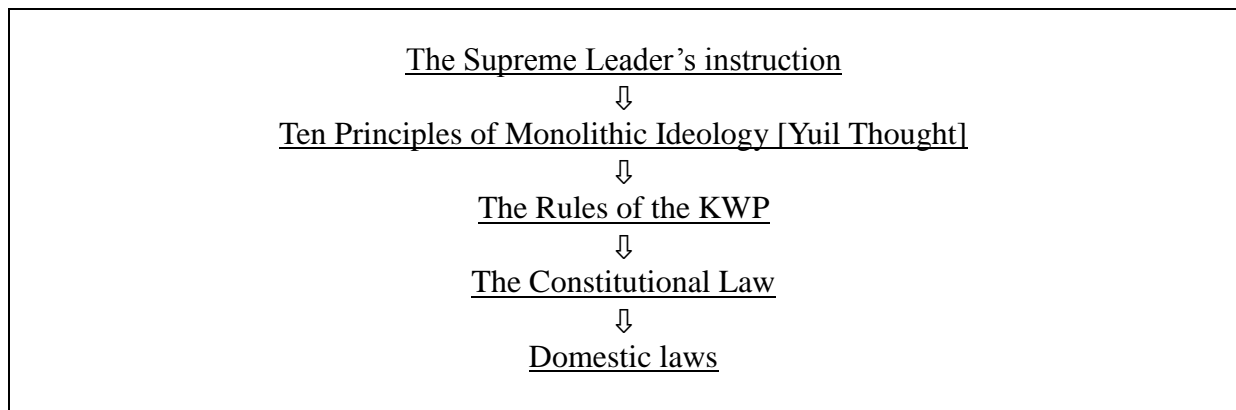
In fact, unlike other communist states, the DPRK regime has never formulated clear and concrete laws for religious activities due to the insignificant impact of religion on the society since the Korean War. However, the DPRK Constitution has consistently affirmed 'freedom of religion' as a fundamental right. Also, there were other legal regulations besides the Constitution on religious activities, created on the basis of their own theoretical orthodoxy and in response to contemporary international conditions. Both the law and the administrative

management of religion did not only encompass a regulating of religious activities or personal faith, but also a mode of discourse that supported governmental systems, political doctrines and bureaucracies. Therefore, in order to understand the religious affairs in North Korea, it is important to grasp the parameters within the legal and administrative systems designated for religion. With this assumption in mind, this section will investigate the transformation of regulations on religion in North Korea in the context of legal and administrative dimensions, which have subsequently become a ground rule for the existence of the KCF.

The Hierarchy of the Legislative System in the DPRK

In North Korea, a diversity of laws and legal regulations exist in a specific hierarchical structure. Unlike other countries where the Constitution is usually regarded as the supreme legal authority, there are three overarching ordinate regulations superior to the Constitution in North Korea: The supreme principle in North Korea is the Supreme Leaders' [*Suryeong*] instruction, followed by the ten principles of monolithic ideology [*Yuil sasang*], and then the rules of the KWP. The power structure of the DPRK's legal system thus shows that the Supreme Leader's instruction and the KWP's decisions in the Party's conference are superior to any kind of written laws including the Constitution. In this kind of legal system, which can also be observed in other Asian socialist states such as China or Vietnam, the function of positive law is practically marginalised while the ruling power can reinforce its authority directly over the citizens (Yoo, 2011).

Chart2: The power structure in the legislative system in the DPRK
(Source: Yoo, 2011)



Despite this multi-layered hierarchy, the DPRK's Constitution still has symbolic significance, for it serves as a mirror reflecting the scope of the Party's policy as well as international circumstances. Given that there is no regulation on religion in the KWP's rules, the Constitution can be seen as the chief principle on the legislation of religion next to Kim Il-Sung's instruction.

Freedom of Religion and Anti-Religious Propaganda in North Korea

Guaranteed as a fundamental right in the Constitution, the enactment of religious freedom underwent a unique process. At the inception of the legal system in 1948, the DPRK, like other Soviet satellite countries, emulated the Soviet 'Stalinist' Constitution of 1936 under the strong influence of Moscow's military administration (Hale, 2002; Song, 2011). However, Section 14 concerning freedom of religion was an exception. In the first Constitution, the principle of freedom of religious belief was clearly and straightforwardly proclaimed: 'Citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea enjoy freedom of religious faith and freedom of performing religious rituals' (Constitution of the DPRK, 1948: Article 2, Section 14).

A remarkable point here is that North Korea differed from other Soviet countries in the lack of mention of a ‘freedom of anti-religious activities’ in the Constitution, and in the absence of a state-initiated anti-religious movement.³⁸ In fact, this very simple clause was the outcome of a most intensive negotiation in the constitutional assembly. Mailk, Stykov, and Tunkin, the Soviet administrators appointed to oversee the enactment of the DPRK Constitution in 1948, witnessed that religious freedom was the most contentious issue in the assembly (Cho, 2012). The original draft of the Constitution, reflecting considerably the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, had indicated more specific criteria regarding religious freedom including doctrines for the separation of religion and the state, the separation between education and religion, and the freedom of religious activities. The relevant clause goes:

Citizens enjoy freedom of belief. Churches should separate themselves from the state, and educational institutions should separate themselves from the church. Religious groups have freedom of their religious works and rituals. No one may make use of religion or churches to engage in political activities (Malik [et al.], 1948, quoted in Cho, 2012:101).

However, according to the report by the Soviet supervisors, ‘this draft of the Constitution aroused the opposition of the right wing over the issue of the section on freedom of religion. Although the religious groups did not oppose the separation of religion and the state, they argued for the removal of the sentence on the separation of education and religion, and on

³⁸ All socialist states specified in their Constitutions that ‘people have a freedom of religion as well as freedom of anti-religious activities’ (Kim, 1978).

forbidding religion from engaging in political activities from the draft' (Malik [et al.], 1948, quoted in Kim, K., 2008:241).³⁹ At the time, they were concerned about the Young Friends' Party (YFP), which was based on Cheondokyo, whose political influence was directly linked to the Democratic National United Front. The following is from a special report written by Soviet supervisors of the DPRK constitutional assembly to the Soviet government:

Section 14 specifies the separation between religion and the state, and prohibits religious groups from engaging in political activities. However, this section is currently contradictory to the YFP's practical experience. Furthermore, considering the YFP's political and popular influence in the United Front, it may have a deleterious impact (Malik [et al.], 1948, quoted in Kim, K., 2008, p.243).

As a result, the Soviet Army and the KWP conceded to their demands, and only kept 'freedom of faith' and 'freedom of ritual activities' in the section.

It was in the newly promulgated Socialist Constitution of the DPRK (Constitution of the DPRK, 1972) that the KWP finally added the clause about the freedom of anti-religious activities and propagation, in line with other socialist states: 'Citizens enjoy freedom of religion and freedom of anti-religious propagation' (Constitution of the DPRK, 1972: Article 4, Section 54). However, in the second major constitutional amendment in 1992, the regime attempted another noticeable change in regulation of religion: while the sentence regarding the freedom of anti-religious propagation in the version of 1972 was removed, a new

³⁹ This report indicates the active involvement of religions in North Korea, particularly Cheondokyo and Protestantism, in politics and education in this period.

sentence was added:

Citizens enjoy freedom of faith. This right is guaranteed with the permission of religious buildings or rituals. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that draw in foreign influence or disrupt the national public order (Constitution of the DPRK, 1992: Article 5, Section 68).

In this revision of the Constitution, where the ‘freedom of anti-religious propagation’ was removed, scholars produced two sorts of interpretations. On the one hand, some scholars such as Ryu Sung-Min (1999), who pay attention to the relationship between the DPRK domestic religious policy and its international relations, contended that it reflected the KWP’s expectation of vigorous non-governmental exchange with capitalist countries in the religious sphere, which might have been helpful to generate economic exchange. For fear of economic stagnation, as Armstrong argued (2013b), Pyongyang by the 1980s was already seeking active contact with capitalist countries.

Ryu Sung-Min’s argument was underpinned by other revision in the 1992 Constitution. In fact, in the constitutional revision in 1992, the most outstanding change was the embodiment of the open-door policy. For example, the DPRK regime replaced the original foreign policy in 1972 – which stated that ‘based upon the principle of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism, the DPRK is in solidarity with other socialist states – with three fundamental principles for foreign policy: independence, peace, and friendship (Constitution of the DPRK, 1992: Article, Section 17). With respect to this change, Kim Pan-Soo (2004), South Korean

specialist in North Korean law, argued that this revision reflected the necessity to create a new legal basis for a new foreign policy due to the downfall of the Soviet bloc and the subsequent impact on the new global order of economy.

Also, Article 37 of this Constitution accommodated a new clause stating that ‘the State shall encourage the establishment of institutions, enterprises, and organisations in our country with an aim to create joint ventures and to cooperate with foreign companies and individuals’ (The Constitution of the DPRK 1992: Article 37). This change was in accordance with the Joint Venture Law of 1984 and the KWP’s declaration of the Rajin-Sonbong Free Economic Trade Zone (FETZ) in 1991.

On the other hand, other academics including Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) considered the KWP’s 1992 modification of constitutional regulation on religion a reflection of the religious sphere of North Korean society at that time. They pointed out that this revision was carried out *after* the accomplishment of the great reformation in the religious terrain since the 1980s, including the establishment of three Christian churches under material and administrative support from South Korean and western Christian organisations, which will be further discussed in the next section. While the constitutional change could be appraised as a major step forward of the North Korean religious policy, according to Kim and Ryu (2002), it could also conversely be understood that the KWP began to be concerned with the relationship between social stability and the religious activities carried out by the increasingly visible believers and by the increasing exchanges with inter-Korean and international religious communities.

In fact, in the same year, there was a great revision of the concept of religion – a change that refined or even eliminated negative associations and connotations from the official definition. The following table compares the revised definition of the term ‘religion’ in *The Korean Language Dictionary [Joseonmal Daesajeon]* (1992/2007) compared with the original edition of *The Modern Korean Dictionary [Hyeondae Joseonmal daesajeon]*(1972).

Table 8: Comparison of DPRK’s Definitions on Religion
(Source: the Social Science Institute, 1972; 1992/2007)

<i>Hyeondae Joseonmal Daesajeon [The Modern Korean Dictionary]</i> (1972)	<i>Joseonmal Daesajeon [The Korean Language Dictionary]</i> (1992/2007)
The reactionary world view or organisation with a belief in the existence of a supernatural or superhuman being that dominates the whole of nature and mankind. Their sermons claim blind faith in and reliance on it with emphasis on the afterlife. There are several religions according to what and how they believe. As an unrealistic and mistaken awareness, religions were historically used as a tool of exploiting and suppressing people, and particularly, as an ideological tool for imperialists to invade less developed countries in recent centuries.	The world view based on the doctrines of absolute faith or belief in the supernatural or superhuman being as sacred existence, with abstracted reflection of people’s social aims and aspirations. Their sermons claim to rely on and follow this sacred existence like God for fulfilment of one’s wishes and endless happiness in the afterlife. There are numerous religions great and small, from primitive religions to Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

Also, the transition of definition for each religion in the DPRK dictionary can be seen in the same way.

Table 9: Comparison of DPRK’s Definitions for Each Religion
(Source: the Social Science Institute, 1972; 1992/2007)

Religion	<i>Hyeondae Joseonmal Daesajeon</i> [The Modern Korean Dictionary] (1972)	<i>Joseonmal Daesajeon</i> [The Korean Language Dictionary] (1992/2007)
Christianity	A religion which originated in Europe based on the belief in Jesus. Their preaching rationalises social inequality and exploitation of old societies. It is divided into several denominations, but all of them function as a spiritual tool for the ruling class to perpetuate the exploitation system.	A religion which worships Jesus Christ as God and follows his doctrines

Related to these revised definitions of religions, Ryu Dae-Young (2009) explained that the practical reasons for a change in perspective from hostility to neutrality in dictionaries was that the function of religion in social reformation and revolution became exposed to the public in North Korea. Since non-governmental interchange between South and North Korea has improved since the late 1980s, the North Korean public witnessed the existence of ideologically progressive religious groups in South Korea, such as the Institution for Transformation of World and Christianity, and the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice – mostly from Catholicism and Protestantism.

Particularly, some liberal South Korean Christians' visit to Pyongyang in the late 1980s, such as Moon Ik-Hwan (a Protestant clergy), Lim Soo-Kyung (a Catholic university student) and Moon Kyu-Hyun (a Catholic priest and member of the Catholic Priests' Association for Justice) had a great impact on the people's idea of Christianity in North Korea. During their stay in Pyongyang, their every move was broadcasted by the [North] Korean Central News Agency, throughout the whole country, including their visit to churches to pray for the

reunification of the country (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Concerning their visits, Hong Dong-Keun, a visiting professor at Kim Il-Sung University and the Pyongyang Seminary, stated that North Korean intellectuals raised questions about the negative description of religion in the official publications of the DPRK. Furthermore, even the public began to recognise that South Korean Christianity – both Protestantism and Catholic – had more autonomous power over the government than the North Koreans expected (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Responding to these opinions, the DPRK eventually decided to change the negative descriptions of religious concepts.

Hong's testimony indicates that the public's perception on religion seemed to change in accordance with the religious organisations' activities and exposure, and therefore the North Korean regime would become politically sensitive to the influence of religious activities on the public. In this regard, the newly added sentence of the revised Constitution in 1992, 'No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that draw foreign influence or disrupt the national public order' (Constitution of the DPRK, 1992: Article 5, Section 68), which imposed an implicit restriction on foreign missionaries, made this constitutional revision less friendly towards international exchange.

Certainly, the guarantee of religious freedom in North Korea was and has been strictly contingent upon the regime's maintenance. The regime's restrictive tolerance toward religious activities was in response to American evangelism, whose conservative and fundamentalist orientation was keenly recognised by the KWP, with historical antecedence, as both a driving force of the development of Korean Protestantism and a baleful threat to the power and

system of the communist regime, stated in the previous section. In this respect, implicit to the 1992 revision was the regime's ambivalent attitude towards religious activities, focusing on the control of foreign influence rather than on the citizens' demand. Since the 1992 constitutional revision, there were two major amendments in 1998 and 2008 respectively, but the section related to religious freedom has not been changed as of 2014.

The Social Background Classification and the Discrimination of the Religious People

Apart from the clause of anti-religious propaganda in the DPRK Constitution, the Project of People's Social Background Classification, launched by the KWP between 1958 and 1960, is often referred to as evidence of the regime's suppression of religion in North Korea, by conservative scholars like Koh Tae-Woo (1988). Shortly after completing the post-war restoration project, the KWP classified citizens into three classes according to their social background – core, wavering, and hostile – as effective means of controlling the population. According to this classification, believers, regardless of their religion, were categorised as hostile together with middle-class merchants, defectors' families and landlords, and were discriminated against by the KWP's differential distribution of political, social and economic resources, such as education, job opportunity, residence allocation, military service and the right to join the Party (Koh, 1988; Hyun, 2008).

Following this, between 1967 and 1970s, the KWP proceeded with a residence re-registration project in order to subdivide the classes into fifty-one categories. Under this new classification, religious believers were given specific class numbers subject to close monitoring by the government:

Table 10: Class Numbers of Religious Believers
(Source: Jeon, 2013)

Category of people	Member of the YFP (Cheondokyo)	Protestants	Buddhists	Catholics
Class	32	42	43	44

This implies that the religious people and their families in this period were suffering from discrimination in their daily life, by the principle of guilty by association.

However, we must note that the Project of People's Social Background Classification, though widely known and referred to among North Korean studies scholars, first appeared in *the Reality of Religious Sphere in the Communist Bloc* (1981) published by the Board of National Unification, formerly the Ministry of Unification of the South Korean government, without the original source of information. Furthermore, even if this kind of class system did exist, the classification of religious people was inconsistent. For instance, quite a few senior-ranking officers who attended the Supreme People's Assembly overtly disclosed their religious family background, which will be discussed in the next section. Even some Protestant clergy, such as Ko Ki-Jun and Kang Ryang-Uk, or the previous heads of Cheondokyo in North Korea, such as Oh Ik-Jae and Choi Deok-Shin, were buried in the Graves of Revolutionary Martyrs together with Kim Il-Sung's comrades in the Manchurian era. Of course, their bereaved families belonged to the core class as well.

In this regard, it seems that religious believers were not discriminated merely because of their religious identities, but also because of other reasons, such as having participated in anti-communist movements or having a family member who had defected to the South. Like the

land reform before the Korean War, the KWP's class policy did not directly aim for the suppression of religion, although a considerable number of religious people categorised in the hostile class have implied that it was difficult for believers to assimilate into the mainstream socialist society.

Religious Freedom and Human Rights in North Korea

As for the regime's impingement on religious activities, which South Korea and other western states have severely criticised as a violation of human rights, it can be said that socialist countries including North Korea have a different perspective on freedom of religion. The KWP's viewpoint can be inferred from the dominant principle of fundamental human rights in the DPRK Constitution: citizens' rights and duties in the DPRK are based on the principle of collectivism, known as one for the entirety, the entirety for one (2012: Article 5, Section 63). In line with this principle, according to Sim Hyeong-II (1973), a North Korean legal expert, human rights guaranteed by the DPRK's Constitution are only applicable to social beings, not individuals:

In a capitalist society, individualism is the main principle penetrating constitutional duties and rights. In contrast, in a socialist society, where collectivism is the base of social life, a citizen's constitutional duties and rights rest on the principle of collectivism (Sim, 1973:111)

In this sense, 'freedom' in North Korea means not a natural birth right, but a conditional right that is only available in a social community. In North Korea, an individual's need

incompatible with the collective need is seen as an act of self-interest, which not only infringes upon others' benefits but also hinders social solidarity because it threatens the happiness of the majority. Therefore, an individual's essential happiness can only be realised in socialism on the basis of collectivism in North Korea (Song, 2011). In connection to this, Kim Il Sung once claimed that 'the law is there to carry out' the task of depriving freedom and the rights of 'the enemy class' who violated other people's rights' (Kim, I, 1958/1981:451), which was why in the first election of the DPRK in 1948, the KWP disenfranchised those labelled as pro-Japanese or as traitors. Today, the regime still has the same legal authority to deprive those who are against the socialist revolution of their constitutional rights including the freedom of religion.

Kim Il-Sung's Instruction on Religion

As mentioned above, the Supreme Leader's instruction was the overriding principle in the legal system of North Korea. The Supreme Leader's instructions were widely disseminated in North Korea through studies of his speeches, quotations, and writings. Kim Il-Sung particularly preferred a face-to-face guidance to the masses. To break away from bureaucracy, he created an original guidance method, i.e. the so-called Cheongsanri Method, in which experts from the umbrella organisation were dispatched to local fields in order to grasp the actual situation there and to provide reasonable advice. Through this method, Kim Il-Sung left a vast record of public speeches as well as dialogues with local labourers, farmers and students. The instructions he made during his lifetime, which dealt with a diversity of subjects, still exercised political leverage in North Korean society in the name of 'legacy politics' [*Yuhunjeongchi*] (Kwon, 2010a).

When it comes to religion, Kim's perspectives were placed in a delicate position. In fact, Kim Il-Sung was surrounded by Protestant believers throughout his whole life. Both of his parents were faithful Protestants, and he spent his formative years under a Methodist minister, Son Jung-Do, who adopted him after his parents' death. Kim Il-Sung paid his tribute to Minister Son by calling him 'a great saviour through his [Kim's] life' (Kim, I., 1992b:9). Also, since the establishment of the socialist regime, Kim was under the influence of another Protestant, Kang Ryang-Uk. As Kim Il-Sung's mentor and a top executive in the DPRK government. With these personal relationships with Protestants in mind, Kim Il-Sung's attitude toward Protestant could not possibly be completely hostile.

Kim Il-Sung's stance on religion since the ceasefire of the Korean War can be summarised from his writings and speeches in the following three key points. First, he repeatedly emphasised that the freedom of faith was and has been guaranteed in the North Korean Constitution. He denied the official sanction against innocent religious activities with a claim that 'if there are believers suppressed by the Party, it is not because of their religious identity but because of their treacherous behaviour against the nation' (Kim, I., 1992c:367).

Second, he emphasised the cultivation of religious people in a socialist way. Since the Korean War, North Korean people overtly expressed their hostility to Christian people. However, in his speech at the Central Committee of the National Youth Alliance in 1969, Kim criticised discriminatory act against religious people (Kim, I., 1969). He urged people not to estrange students having religious backgrounds, but to persuade them to follow the socialist way. As

discussed in Chapter Three, for the DPRK regime, after the huge loss of the population during the war, maximising human resources was the most urgent issue for industrialisation in this period. Hence, it seems that the regime committed to reform religious people through socialist education rather than to isolate them from society.

Finally, especially in his late years, he often gave praise to patriotic believers. In North Korea, it was not difficult to find books introducing the lives of patriotic religious leaders.⁴⁰ In particular, Kim Il Sung's autobiography, *With the Century* (1992a), had a great social impact both inside and outside North Korean society due to its comprehensive description of Kim's Christian background as well as his close friendship with patriotic Christian clergies. Shortly after the publication of the autobiography, North Korea began to re-evaluate religions and their believers, which resulted in the relaxation of regulation on religious activities.

To conclude, freedom of religion in the DPRK's Constitution remains in the abstract due to the lack of concrete regulations on religious activities. However, judging from the moderate anti-religious propaganda in 1960s and 1970s, as well as the constitutional revision in 1992, it seems certain that instead of driving out religion completely, the KWP has maintained a tolerant approach toward religion, highlighting its collective ideological aspect rather than personal faith. Considering Constitutional interpretation of religious freedom and Kim Il-Sung's attitude towards Christianity; that is, religious activities are approved in North Korea on the condition that the national interest preceded any other religious values.

⁴⁰ Most recently, Kang Ryang-Uk's biography has been officially published by the DPRK government in 2013.

Summary

Chapter Three examined how the DPRK's attitude toward Protestantism has developed specific church-state relations. The first section explored the historical background of the clash between North Korean Protestantism and the KWP. This yielded two specific findings. First, the clash between the KWP and pro-American Protestants – who formed the major political force shortly after decolonisation – was not caused by the communists' unilateral suppression of Christianity, but took on a more complicated interweaving between class struggle and the revolutionary-patriotic framework. Second, during the nation-building process in North Korea, not every Christian opposed the communist regime, and there were pro-communist Protestants who supported Kim Il-Sung and the KWP. With these pro-communist believers, Kim Il-Sung attempted to establish a Christian organisation that countered the pro-American Protestants.

The second section dealt with the KCF's policies in two categories: ecclesiastical and political. Ecclesiastically, the KCF's achievements after its re-establishment in 1972 could be seen as laying a practical groundwork for religious activities to take place; these achievements included the nation-wide survey on the Christian population and house churches, the publication of the Bible and hymnbook, the reopening of the Seminary for clerical training, and the foundation of new churches. However, the KCF also showed a strong political identity through their pro-government activities and their engagement in anti-South Korea propaganda. Also, it is likely that such a proper ecclesiastical form was not for the need of the Protestant community in North Korea, but for international communication and for the establishment of the united front with the anti-government South Korean

Protestants. This means that the DPRK began paying attention to religious communication between the South and the North, as well as that between the DPRK and other western states, for it realised that these communications could improve international relations, and could serve as a useful vehicle for the DPRK's national strategy for reunification in competition with the ROK.

In the last section, as an extended policy of the DPRK government towards the KCF, changes in the legal regulation and constitutional laws on religion in the DPRK were investigated. Here, it is important to note that Kim Il-Sung and the DPRK government consistently tolerated religious practices, provided those practices did not violate the dominant ideology or threatened the existing political system. Alongside transformation of constitutional and legal regulations, the DPRK regime also modified its national ideology, the Juche idea, to accommodate Protestantism within society. As an extended policy on Protestantism, the transformation of the Juche idea will be examined in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 The Juche Idea and Protestantism

Introduction

This chapter examines the ideological relationship between Protestantism and the Juche idea, the DPRK's national ideology. It was the late 1980s that the DPRK regime began to make an effort on associating Juche with Protestantism, which was timed to coincide with the KCF's activities for international communication. However, Juche's amicable attitude toward Protestantism presented a great contrast to its hostility before the 1970s, when the Juche idea originally provided anti-religious – more precisely, anti-Protestant – views as its ideological-moral standard.

Concerning this change, this thesis argues that it was related to the KCF's policies on inter-Korean and international relations. When the KCF began to make contact with the overseas Korean Protestants and international Christian communities such as the WCC from the 1980s, the international organisations consistently brought up the question of the Protestant community's genuineness. Particularly, they cast serious doubt on the existence of Protestantism in a communist totalitarian regime, which was based on the atheism of the Marxist-Leninist tradition. Also, some anti-North Korean Protestants claimed that the North Korean idolised worship of their Leaders (Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il) was incompatible with the monotheistic faith of Protestantism.

In this situation, the KCF desired approval of its activities from the international Protestant communities, which would facilitate the establishment of a united front with Protestants outside North Korea, who opposed to the ROK government. Both the KCF and the DPRK understood that this united front could be built on the the common Protestant identity. In order for their religious identity to gain approval from the international communities, it was necessary for the KCF to substantiate the compatibility between Protestantism and the Juche idea, which led to the revision of the Juche perspective on Protestantism.

In relation to this, the chapter investigates the way in which the Juche perspective on Protestantism has been ideologically transformed, by comparing the situation before and after the establishment of the KCF. This chapter is structured as follows: the first section discusses the general outline of the development of Juche and its normative cultural values. Through the discussion, this thesis shows the incompatibility between the original Juche idea and Protestantism. Then, the second section turns to the anti-Protestant perspective inculcated in Juche before the establishment of the KCF by examining theoretical literature and cultural works and films. In this examination, this thesis presents that the Juche's anti-Protestant narratives were interwoven with anti-Americanism through the DPRK regime's explicit cultural policy. The last section finally explores the process of the transformation of Juche perspective on Protestantism since the 1980s. In this section, this thesis points out two important points that forced the DPRK regime to revise its national ideology from being hostile to being tolerant toward Protestantism: one was the pressure from the international Christian organisations surrounding activities of the KCF and the other was the DPRK's overseas Korean campaigns.

These examinations will answer the research question: Why was Protestantism significant in the development of the Juche idea? Furthermore, this examination will advance one of the key arguments of this thesis; that is, the DPRK policy on Protestantism and the KCF implicitly aimed for the non-governmental diplomacy rather than for its domestic religious sphere.

Literature Reviews

There were considerable number of books and articles on the Juche idea published in South Korea, focusing on the cultural difference between North and South Korea. Academic works on the relationship between the Juche idea and Protestantism were also plentifully written by South Korean theologians under the influence of American Presbyterianism. However, in most cases, these works adhered to their fundamentalist-conservative belief, which contended the incompatibility between the communist ideology and Protestantism.

Unlike those conservative works, Kim Heung-Soo's article entitled 'On the Future of North Korean Christianity in the Society of the Juche Thought' (2013) presented the way in which North Korean Protestantism could affiliate itself with the Juche idea. In this article, the author's attention was paid to a unique spirit of North Korean Protestantism based on nationalism, which enabled the Juche idea to change its stance on this religion. To describe this uniqueness of North Korean Protestantism in accordance with its ideology *sui generis*, he coined the term 'Juche Theology.'

In parallel with Kim's approach, Byun Jin-Heung's PhD thesis, *Understanding Religion by Juche Ideology* (1994), researched the relationship between religion and the Juche idea, the North Korean national ideology. Focusing on the people-oriented philosophy inherent in their national ideology, he explored the DPRK's theoretical effort towards assimilating religion into the national ideology since its change of policy on religion.

In contrast to the abundance of Korean literature issued in South Korea, literature written in English on Juche or cultural-religious subjects of North Korea has been very narrowly published. This phenomenon might be, on the one hand, generally caused by the language barrier and limited access to first-hand North Korean materials, from which most western scholars have suffered. On the other hand, this phenomenon shows how scholastic interest has slanted towards North Korean politics, military or economy rather than its culture.

Despite this, Gordon White's 'North Korean Chu-ch'e: The political Economy of National Independence' (1975) introduced a historical analysis of the method through which the Juche idea permeated into North Korean political and economic system that is relevant today, in spite of its early publication. *Communism in Korea: The Movement* (Scalapino and Lee, 1972) is often cited by both Korean and western academics as a primer on the DPRK's nation-building and the history of the Korean communist movement. This work is useful for understanding the different processes of the communist movement by various sects of Korean communism between South and North Korea. It also described the ideological conflicts between the KWP and local religious intellectuals who organised political parties such as Young Friends' Party (Cheondokyo) and the Korean Democratic Party (Protestantism). However, authors interpreted Korean communist history as an elite movement as they paid

attention to the high-ranking communist members and intellectuals only. Furthermore, by its overemphasis on the foreign powers' intervention – that of the US and the Soviet Union – on the affairs on the Korean Peninsula, the local activists' movements were underestimated.

In contrast, Armstrong's *the North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (2003) and *Tyranny of the Weak: North Korea and the World, 1950-1992* (2013b) stressed the aspect of the DPRK's independence. In the first book, he exclusively dealt with the effects of the various communist policies on the public such as poor farmers, workers, women, and young students whereas other authors – including Scalapino and Lee (1972) – focused on the policy-makers. By investigating the public responses, Armstrong contended that the main driving force behind the successful establishment of the communist regime was the localised communist activities conforming to the specific situation in North Korea, despite the huge reliance on the Soviets politically and economically.

In this respect, Armstrong saw the process of the DPRK's nation-building as the Koreanisation of Soviet Communism rather than the Sovietisation of Korean Communism. The tone of his argument in the second book was in line with the first. Highlighting North Korea's diplomatic strategy balancing itself in a vortex of superpower politics, he explained that the DPRK's Juche diplomacy was a result of its own economic development by the rapid industrialisation and its ability to withstand the force from the Soviet Union, the US and China.

However, in *The North Korean Revolution*, he also criticised that the DPRK's policy for

revolution led to a ‘modernization without modernity’ due to its deficiency of ‘self-reflective, pluralistic elements associated with modern society’ (Armstrong, 2003:7). This, he argued, stemmed from North Korea’s attachment to pre-modern cultural values, especially a stronger Confucian tradition than that of China or Vietnam. While other communist countries prioritised the material condition for the revolution, he pointed out that the KWP emphasised on the ideological-ethical justification. According to him, this uniqueness came from Confucian thought; that is, spirituality is more valuable than material pleasure.

As a matter of fact, in North Korean studies, using such Confucian framework to explain the relationship between the ruler and the ruled is not uncommon. Park Han (2002) and Bruce Cumings (2002) also argued in a similar way that the emphasis on familial structure between citizens and the nation, a significant element of Juche, originated from the patriarchal system of Korean Confucian tradition.

However, according to *Orientalism* written by Edward Said, it is a typical Orientalist approach that ‘each discrete instance of real behaviour can be reduced down and back to a small number of explanatory “original” categories’, which implies an inherited quality labelled as *sui generis* (Said, 2002:234). Under this approach, the Orient is regarded as an unchangeable, monolithic, and fundamentally unique object. In my opinion, Said’s Orientalism can be applied to these researches’ works. The Confucian tradition was a product of pre-modern society before the establishment of the DPRK regime, and the DPRK regime emerged by liquidating the vestiges of such feudalistic traditions through economic and cultural reforms.

Furthermore, the patriarchal tradition, which the researchers defined as specific to Confucian culture, can be seen in western Christianity as well. (For example, in both Protestantism and Catholicism, God was regularly referred to as 'Father' in prayers and hymns, who demands absolute obedience, and believers were encouraged to call themselves his children.) Nevertheless, by overemphasising the selective feature within the DPRK's political system, they implicitly disparaged the DPRK's other achievement of modernisation, and eventually characterised the whole North Korean society as less civilised. Above all, the most significant weakness in their arguments is that they did not clearly show what made the Confucian tradition possible to mechanically operate in North Korean society in spite of the DPRK's disapproval.

On the other hand, to illustrate North Korean familism, Shin Gi-Wook (2006) and Han Hong-Koo (1999) offered an alternative view in the historical context. According to their argument, the emphasis on the strong connection between the ruler and ruled in the Juche idea can be grounded in Kim Il-Sung's experience in joining the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for the resistance against Japanese imperialism. When his Korean comrades were purged by the CCP, accused of being spies for pro-Japanese society, he became the step-father for the children of the victims, and his political family became the power nucleus of the KWP in North Korea (Han, 1999).

By studying Juche, both Park Han (2002) and Lee Hy-Sang (2001) sought to explain the durability of the North Korean regime despite the great famine in the 1990s. Based on his

own experience during his visit to North Korea, Park's *North Korea: The Politics of Unconventional Wisdom*(2002) systematically scrutinised the way in which the Juche idea has been inculcated in various sectors of North Korean society ranging from politics, military, education, and media. In this work he conceptualised the Juche idea as a cultural belief entailing specific moral principles, which can be interpreted in the historical context.

Similarly, another of his article, 'The Nature and Evolution of Juche Ideology' (1996), also defined the idea as a mass belief system. He argued that there were religious elements mutually shared by Christianity and the Juche idea, such as immortality and the idea of the chosen people.⁴¹ To demonstrate the strength of the Juche idea, his emphasis is on its function to legitimise its regime on the basis of the moral belief system in line with the concept of political religion. However, in his argument the linkage between the economic pursuit in the practical need and the Juche idea was not clearly discussed while over emphasising the spirituality of the idea. Furthermore, like Armstrong (2003) and Cumings (2002), he also relied on the Confucian framework to explain the familial value in Juche.

In contrast to Park Han, Lee Hy-Sang's *North Korea: A Strange Socialist Fortress* (2001) focused on the economic policy based on the Juche idea. Through a full-scale historical analysis of North Korea's action in economy, military, ideology, politics and diplomacy, Lee claimed that the whole North Korean system was to pursue the ultimate goal of communist unification for the Korean Peninsula. According to him, in the relentless pursuit of winning

⁴¹ According to Park (1996), the Juche carries the notion that people are predestined to inspire and lead the world's oppressed people. This notion of Juche characterised North Korean nationalism as ultra-ethnocentric and uncompromising.

hegemonic unification, the Juche idea functioned to nurture citizens to endure an isolated life from the international system, and furthermore, to build up Kim's leadership based upon their hereditary transmission power.

While Lee's work highlighted the uncompromising and belligerent behaviour of the North Korean regime as a result of the guidance of Juche, the authors in *Origins of North Korea's Juche: Colonialism, War and Development* (Suh [et al.], 2013) focused on the role of Juche as a flexible response to various domestic and international affairs North Korea experienced, including war, industrialisation, and colonialism. Pointing out North Korea's strategical changes in social policies, politics, economy and diplomacy, these contributors put forward their arguments that Juche embodied the cumulative effects of its historical experiences and flexible responses.

Despite diverse interpretations of the North Korea regime, we can see two consistent approaches in the literature examined above. First, the Juche idea has been instrumentalised, whether practically or spiritually, for the purpose of maintaining the ruling power. Second, the study of Juche's origin guided the direction of inquiry towards historical investigations of the process by which particular state power complexes of North Korea were constructed in the nexus between global and local social relations. In this context, the external conditions of the society, including political struggles and interactions with global and local processes of social structuring, should be treated with significance. Following these approaches, this chapter also focuses on the Juche interpretation of Protestantism as a moral-ideological linkage between the international communities and North Korea.

Chapter 4.1. Establishing Juche: Normative-Ideological Values

This section describes the general outlines of the institutional-doctrinal dimensions of Juche idea and its normative-ideological values. Although western scholars often termed ‘Juche’ as ‘self-reliance’ or ‘subjectivity’, the original meaning of the term is much more complicated. According to Kim Il-Sung, the founder of Juche, Juche signifies ‘the independent stance of rejecting dependence on other and of using one’s own powers, believing in one’s own strength and displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance’ (Kim, I., 1975b:117). Kim Jong-Il, who systematically theorised the Juche idea as Kim Il-Sung’s successor, also explained it as follows:

Juche is a Korean word. It means the subjectivity in English. The revolution in each country should be carried out responsibly by its own people, the masters, in an independent manner, and in a creative way suitable to its specific conditions. It raised the fundamental question of philosophy by regarding human as the main factor, and elucidated the philosophical principle that human is the master of everything and decides everything (Kim, J., 1997:12).

As such, the Juche idea stressed that it is important to foster potential using human’s own resources and reserves of human creativity. Most of all, the Juche idea primarily required people to achieve sovereignty [*Jajuseong*]. In this sense, Juche sought an indigenous system of Korean collective thought as well as an extreme nationalism. The Juche idea is the

ideological foundation of the DPRK's contemporary goals – an independent foreign policy, a self-sufficient economy, and a self-reliant defence posture (Kim, J., 1982/85). In the Supreme People's Committee in 1967, the KWP established the principles of a monolithic ideological system [*Yuil sasang*], a set of ten principles and 65 clauses which indicated standards for governance and guides the behaviours of the North Korean peoples, which was mentioned in Chapter Three. These principles put emphasis on unconditional obedience to Kim Il-Sung's monolithic leadership historically authorised as the founder of Juche. According to these principles, the Juche idea is the standard value and ideology that dominates everything, including social life, economy, culture, military, politics and people's daily lives (Cho, 2002).

The Juche idea gradually grew out of the long historical process through which Kim Il-Sung and his faction contended with his competitors, including his domestic rivals and international superpowers, over how to mould North Korean society. The growth of Juche largely passed through three phases. When it first appeared in the history of North Korea in the 1950s, the term Juche was used for the practical purpose of denouncing the Soviet and Chinese intervention in North Korea's domestic affairs, as well as eradicating factions against Kim Il-Sung that drew in foreign influences on North Korean society (Lee, J., 2000). By the 1970s, the DPRK leadership transformed Juche into an ideological backbone for mass mobilisation, which was necessary for the economic and industrial construction on a national level (Lee, H., 2001). In the 1980s, Kim Jong-Il revised the Juche idea, attaching to it the concept of social organism in justification of his hereditary succession of power (Kim, H., 1994).

As such, the meaning of Juche has changed adequately for different purposes in each phase. As the historical product of colonialism, the Korean War, economic development, and the collapse of the international communist bloc, the Juche idea took nearly twenty years to be codified into ten volumes. In this regard, we can cautiously infer that it is not uncommon for the DPRK to modify the Juche understanding on Protestantism as the occasion arises – for the non-governmental Protestant diplomacy. Before discussing the changes in Juche stance on Protestantism, this section first introduces different aspects of the Juche idea from Marxism-Leninism, broadly recognised as orthodox idea of communist ideology. Following this, the theoretical system of Juche is also outlined, so-called social-organism: the way in which the Juche idea had-influence over North Korean society, including its perception of Protestantism. Then, the consistent values and principles of Juche are discussed in this section, which were promulgated through its national culture, and was applicable to the DPRK's policies on Protestantism.

Separation from Marxism-Leninism

In a very nascent stage of establishment, the Juche idea was implicated in national pride and patriotism. Nevertheless, Kim Il-Sung initially pursued the creative application of Marxism-Leninism in a specific nationalist context of North Korea.

In connection with the problem of establishing Juche I think it necessary to touch on internationalism and patriotism. Internationalism and patriotism are inseparably linked with each other. You must know that the love of Korean Communists for their country does not go against the internationalism of the working class but conforms

fully with it. To love Korea is just as good as to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp and, likewise, to love the Soviet Union and the socialist camp means precisely loving Korea. They constitute a complete one (Kim, I., 1958/1973:584-5).

In this speech, we can see that Kim still sought to reconcile any tension that existed between nationalism and international socialism in the Juche idea, with an emphasis on the idea that nationalism (i.e. patriotism) was not the antithesis of socialism (i.e. internationalism). However, in the 1970s, the Juche idea indicated its potential for the acquisition of independent status from Marxism-Leninism. Kim Jong-Il, Kim Il-Sung's successor, drew the line between Marxism-Leninism and Juche idea as follows:

Although [Marxist classics] established the materialistic dialectical view on the human question, they did not give a full account of the essential feature of man as dominator and transformer of nature and society (Kim, J., 1974/1985:2)

In the 1990s, the change of the Cold War in international society reinforced the rupture between the Juche idea and Marxism-Leninism. With the revision of its Constitution following the collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the DPRK completely removed Marxism-Leninism from its official document, and reinforced nationalism in Juche under the slogan 'socialism of our style', which symbolised national solidarity between the leader, the Party, and the people surrounding the nationalist aspiration in pursuit of their independent political-economic domains, instead of being subjugated to either the capitalist or the communist world (Shin, 2006).

According to Gwak Seung-Ji, a South Korean scholar, our-style socialism can be defined as a defensive strategy for mobilising national identity in the midst of external capitalist powers, distinguishing the DPRK's socialist system from other Soviet satellite countries (Gwak, 1997). Kim Jong-Il's argument was that socialist Eastern Europe failed due to their mechanical imitation of the Soviet model whilst ignoring their different historical conditions: 'Many countries applied the principles of the Marxist-Leninist materialist conception of history dogmatically, failing to advance revolution continually after the establishment of the socialist system' (Kim, J., 1990:1).

On the contrary, he believed that the Juche idea enabled the DPRK to escape from the collapse due to its superiority and originality appropriate for the specific situation of North Korea: '[...] Guided by the Juche idea, our people have built socialism to suit the specific situation of our country, following the road they have chosen and mobilising their own strength' (Kim, J., 1990:1).

Theoretical System of Juche: Socio-Political Organism

Differentiating itself from Marxism-Leninism, the Juche idea has accommodated a socio-political organism theory that shaped North Korean society into an organic unit, interlinking the Supreme Leader [*Suryeong*], the Party and the masses into a unified entity sharing a common destiny.

The political and ideological might of the motive force of revolution is nothing but the

power of single-hearted unity between the Suryeong, the Party and the masses, endorsed by the single ideology and united leadership (Han, 1999:360).

Fundamentally, this theory is based on the assumption of the eternality of society. From the Juche perspective, a human being has two kinds of lives: an individual physical life and a socio-political life (Shin, 2005). The former is described as mere mortality given by biological parents whereas the latter has immortal destiny given by society. Because every eternal socio-political life shares the same fate as the combined socio-political organism, a human being is neither a merely biological being nor a purely spiritual being, but a social being who lives in the social relationship.

The Juche idea indicates, for the first time in history, that a man has a socio-political integrity, as well as a physical life. [...] True human life [...] can only be realised admirably in a socialist society based on collectivism. In this society, people are free from all manners of exploitation and oppression, domination and subordination, and can lead an independent and creative life (Kim, J., 1994, quoted in Shin, 2005:4).

According to this theory, the Suryeong as ‘the brain’ occupies the most important position in society because he is the only one capable leading and enlightening the masses; hence, to him must belong the political power to monopolise, to make the final decision, and to control information. Furthermore, due to its eternal nature, the socio-political life must be prioritised over the individual physical life.

We might say that the socio-political life is more valuable to a man than physical life. [...] If he is forsaken by society and deprived of political independence, although he seems to be alive, he is virtually dead as a social human being. That is why the revolutionaries deem it far more honourable to die in the fight for freedom than to keep themselves alive in slavery (Kim, J. 1998, quoted in Shin, 2005:3).

The theory of socio-political life contributed to the spiritualisation of the leader's death. Both Kim Il-Sung's and Kim Jong-Il's death, in 1994 and in 2011 respectively, were depicted by the DPRK official announcement as a mere end of their physical lives, meaning that their political bodies⁴² are still alive to carry out the national revolutionary mission. Particularly, after Kim Il-Sung's death, the Juche idea has been sublimated as the most important and sacred commandment, entailing a spiritual direction by the national founder who exists invisibly. Indeed, all the institutional, political, economic, public policies and reforms in the DPRK are still anchored in Juche after its founder's death; this is referred to as 'Legacy Politics' [*Yuhunjeongchi*] (Kwon, 2010a).

In other words, Kim Il-Sung, who is physically deceased but politically alive, is still wielding strong influence over the North Korean society, including its religion, through the Juche idea. Implicit here is that the DPRK's policy on Protestantism, whether to accommodate or prevent it, substantially depended on Kim Il-Sung's and Kim Jong-Il's instructions labelled with 'Juche', during their lifetimes.

⁴² Similarly, Ernst Kantorowicz described the two legal bodies of the king in *the King's Two Bodies*, his study of medieval English political theology: the corporeal and mortal body, and the political and immortal body (Kantorowicz, 1959/1998)

Normative Values of the Original Juche idea and Protestantism

In North Korea, the so-called ‘good culture’, including artistic activities, must follow the KWP’s guideline with the description of unwavering loyalty toward the Party. When the original Juche idea systematised as the national ideology, led by Kim Jong-Il, between the late 1960s and the 1980s, there were two normative values incompatible with Protestantism: revolutionary and nationalist cultures. The KWP underscores the revolutionary and nationalist properties of culture as indicated in Section 41, Article 3 of the Constitution, which was revised in 1998:

The DPRK constructs human and revolutionary culture that contributes to socialist labours. In the development of national culture, the State opposes reactionary tendency stemming from imperialist encroachment on culture, protects the national cultural heritage, and succeeds to it in conformity with socialist system (The DPRK Constitution, Article 3 Section 41, 1998).

Those revolutionary and national cultures reflect modernisation and nationalism respectively, both of which have been regarded as significant discourse of culture in the post-colonial history of Korea. The DPRK claims that the origin of revolutionary and nationalist cultures could be traced back to the anti-Japanese struggle in the colonial period (Kim, I., 1964/1982a).

When establishing Kim Il-Sung’s Monolithic ideology [*Yuil sasang*], which put emphasis on unconditional obedience to Kim’s monolithic leadership, in the Supreme People’s Committee in 1967, the Party claimed that Kim’s unchallengeable power was historically authorised as

he founded the Juche idea based on his anti-imperial resistance activities during the colonial period. In his thesis *On the Juche Idea* (1982/1985), Kim Jong-Il highlighted the Korean resistance movement against Japanese imperialism as the basis of the Juche idea.

The Korean revolution which opened the age of Juche could not advance even a step forward unless it was conducted in an independent and creative way from the start. It was a difficult and complex revolution which had to deal with the tasks of the anti-imperialist, national-liberation revolution, with formidable Japanese imperialism as the target, and those of the anti-feudal, democratic revolution simultaneously. It was an arduous revolution which had to hew out an untrodden path (Kim, J., 1982/85:4).

In the above speech by Kim Jong-Il, we can see that he ultimately championed the history of the KWP, mainly organised by his partisan comrades based on Japanese-colonised Manchuria. In order to propagate the Monolithic ideology [*Yuil sasang*] to the public, the KWP promoted the study of the anti-Japanese movement in Korea as well as the historical goal of the Korean communist movement (that is, liberation from imperialism) as the origin of Juche.

Concerning revolutionary culture, according to the DPRK's claim, it stemmed from the new revolutionist generation for the anti-Japanese war during the colonisation. In this period, the revolutionary culture was demonstrated as a newly constructed culture for the new society, dismantling the old imperialist and feudalistic elements. Since liberation, defining customs during the Japanese colonial period as vestiges of the old feudal society to be liquidated, the KWP promoted revolutionary culture with the aim of inculcating revolutionary ideas in the

public, combining people's ways of life, in both material and spiritual ways (Kim, I., 1963/1982). In this case, the fundamental change of society is supposed to be carried out through subversion of the old social system and the construction of the new progressive system.

However, with the term revolutionary culture, the KWP laid stress on the glorification of Kim Il-Sung's achievement rather than the people's general anti-imperialist activities (Shin, 2000). In 1966, Kim Jong-Il officially defined revolutionary art and literature as the artistic works for symbolising the achievement of the Supreme Leader – Kim Il-Sung.

Table 11: Change in Definition of Revolutionary Arts and Culture
(Source, Kim, J., 1964/1992:50; 1966/2000:112-114)

	1964	1966
Kim Jong Il's Definition of Revolutionary Arts and Culture	Works that contribute actively to cultivate revolutionary and [working] class culture	Works aiming to foster the public as the idealistic communists who have a revolutionary view of the world following the Supreme Leader's thought

Implicit to this change in definition is the change of the origin of Juche, that is, the Supreme Leader's thought (the Juche idea) stemmed from Kim Il-Sung's liberation movement during the Japanese colonisation. In this process, the organic linkage between the Juche idea and Kim's patriotic activities was created in the name of revolutionary tradition. Furthermore, through numerous artistic works of revolutionary culture illustrating Kim Il-Sung's achievement, this culture became instrumentalised for the idolisation of Kim Il-Sung.

Another normative value of culture, which is situated on the common emotional ground of North Korean people, is nationalism. In the original discourse of socialist revolution, nationalism was seen as subservient to the class struggle. In *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, argued that antagonism between the nations will vanish when the proletariat achieves supremacy over the bourgeois within each nation because the exploitation of one nation by another will end if that of one individual by another ends (Marx and Engels, 1848/1969). Furthermore, they contended that it was only the proletariat class that could remove hostility between the nations, who did not have a specific national prejudice by nature (Marx and Engels, 1848/1969).

However, in the process of socialist revolution, the communist leaders realised that nationalism was strategically useful to encourage the socialist movement, particularly in the countries with colonial experiences. Stalin's *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (1936) pointed out the important but underestimated debates among the Marxists of the Second International on what they called 'the national question'. In this writing, Stalin replaced Lenin's international socialism with his theory of 'socialism in one country' (Shin, 2006). He acknowledged, in a strategic way, the power of national sentiments, the right to national self-determination, and the members associated with bourgeois nationalists (Shin, 2006).

Stalin's approach to nationalism encouraged Kim Il-Sung to create a unique framework combining communism with nationalism, providing the cornerstone of the Juche idea. Stalin's definition in 1936 was that a nation is a historically constituted and stable community of

people formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological makeup revealed in a common culture (Stalin, 1936). In the beginning of its establishment, North Korea adopted Stalin's concept of nation until the 1960s.

However, as the Juche idea was systematically theorised by Kim Jong-Il between the 1970s and 1980s, the concept of nation also changed. The significant change was adding 'blood' in the concept while removing 'economic life'. Related to this change, North Korea explained that the Marxist methodology focusing on the economic relations was applicable only to the general history of European nations, while North Korea had a unique national history based on the independent national consciousness derived from the common blood relations (The Social Science Institute, 1985). Furthermore, according to Kim Jong-Il, people sharing the same blood meant that the people have the same ancestors, thereby possessing a commonness in the physical constitution. This commonness by blood, unlike racial commonness naturally formed by living styles under a certain geographical condition, is socially formed through history (Kim, J., 1997).

As a result, in *the [North] Korean Language Dictionary* (1985/2007), the term nation was defined as 'the group of people proclaimed on the same basis of language, blood, territory, cultural similarity through the long history of struggle for the sovereignty' (The Social Science Institute, 1992/2007: 246). This definition indicated an ethnic concept of nation characterised by homogeneity which emphasised the same ancestor, historical experience, blood, and language. Furthermore, this homogeneous concept of nation politically implied a yardstick of patriotism. For North Korea, blood relation was the precondition of a nation or of

forming a nation. In this homogeneous concept of nation, betraying the nation ultimately means betraying the family, who shares the common ancestor, blood, and historical experiences; which is morally disapproved.

In fact, the linkage between patriotist nationalism and anti-imperialism can be traced back to the process of nation-building when the DPRK's cultural policy was shown by the restoration of a traditional culture damaged during the colonial period. In May 1948, in preparation for the establishment of the DPRK after three years of Soviet Occupation, Kim Il-Sung set forth his view of national culture in a dialogue with Hong Myong-Hee, the Korean nationalist author and politician:

The Koreans are [a] great people with such a long history of five thousand years and a glorious tradition. [...] In the past, the Japanese imperialists attempted to annihilate the Korean national culture by every conceivable means. There was a significant meaning for Korean people to revive and develop their own culture devastated by Japanese Imperialism. Only the development of the national culture enabled us to heighten the pride of the people and build a new democratic nation, Chosun (Korea) (Kim, I., 1948/1979:311-312).

As above, from the earliest days of nation-building, by contrast with other Soviet satellite countries, North Korea strongly appealed to the message of nationalism and national liberation from Japanese imperialism by promoting the uniqueness of national culture rather than Soviet internationalism which had the authorisation and even encouragement from the

Soviet authorities (Armstrong, 2003). In other words, due to the linkage to the struggle against Japanese imperialism for national liberation, the concept of nationalism within Juche idea laid out a logical basis for refuting the demand from the powerful countries of the Soviet Union, and furthermore, the US (after the Korean War): opening its door to the international community as well as accepting foreign cultures. North Korea considers itself, once a nation of the oppressed people, as the leading power of liberation. Reflecting on the bitter experience of during Japanese colonisation, the construction of national culture in the DPRK was concerned primarily with the task against cultural imperialism, more accurately, American Imperialism since the ceasefire of the Korean War (Han, 2011; Chung, 2011).

Furthermore, the DPRK government dismisses the existence of a universal value of culture applicable to the whole world (Song, 2011). They regard the globalisation of culture, which highlights universality rather than singularity, as cultural invasion aiming to annihilate inherent national values. Therefore, espousing global culture in the DPRK has been severely criticised as an anti-national manoeuvre against the State, which would ‘lead to the national collapse from within, through erosion of national culture’ (Kim, J., 1995:78). Instead of universal value of culture, the DPRK asserts that all nations and people have their own culture, with their own unique quality, distinguished from each other.

Additionally, in the discourse of national culture, the DPRK’s emphasis on anti-Japanese Imperialism was strategically related to the competition with the ROK for the authenticity of Korea. While the DPRK concentrated on liquidating the remnants of Japanese colonial culture by highlighting national culture, the US Military Occupation and the South Korean

political leadership were relatively reluctant to clear away the old colonial system.

During their occupation, the US Military Administration in South Korea was primarily aiming to build an anti-Soviet (communist) front, whose existence was directly linked to the US security, rather than deporting the Japanese from the Korean Peninsula. Although Japan was an enemy against the US during World War II, it was also a strong anti-communist state. With the US support, Japan became a part of the anti-Soviet front in the post-war period. In this geopolitical circumstance, the US necessarily suppressed anti-Japanese sentiment in South Korea (Jeon, 2011). On the contrary, the DPRK not only situated anti-imperialism against Japan – and against the US after the Korean War – on the common emotional ground but also secured sympathisers who approved the DPRK as the legitimate nation in Succession to the Chosun dynasty in the pre-colonial period (Lee, 2005).

From the Gramscian perspective, we can see the way in which Kim Il-Sung and his party could secure a consensual hegemony by promoting such values. While concentrating on the colonial and post-colonial history rather than the conflict formation between the classes, they emphasised the striking peculiarity of the Juche idea compared with Marxism-Leninism. The DPRK traced the origin of Juche to the period of Kim Il-Sung's resistance movement before decolonisation. With this project, they sought to magnify the unique anti-imperialist history of Korea, which was unlike the historical examples of the Soviet and Eastern European communism, and legitimised its difference.

Also, based on Kim's partisan history, North Korean socialism became indigenised in

conformity with the common sense of the local people. For most North Korean people who had colonial experiences, anti-Japanese imperialism was ethically persuasive whereas the idea of class struggle or international socialism were relatively unfamiliar, since most of them did not experience a communist movement due to colonial oppression. Indeed, the socialist movement in colonised Korea was monopolised by a small minority of leftist intellectuals who were relatively rich and well-educated. In combining with Kim's partisan history, the revolutionary culture in North Korea was related to the patriotist struggle rather than struggles for the emancipation of a particular class. What made this possible was the patriotism-oriented atmosphere of North Korean society, which overwhelmed the socialist idealism.

Furthermore, considering these normative values examined above, the Juche idea was originally incompatible with Protestantism for the following reasons. First, the feudalistic and pre-modern feature of Korean Protestantism is incompatible with the revolutionary culture of Juche idea. As discussed in Chapter Three, in the colonial period, most pro-American Protestant leaders in Pyong-An province were middle class intellectuals who owned their own lands. Also, some wealthy western missionaries employed poor Korean tenant farmers to cultivate the lands belonging to the churches. Due to their economic wealth, the DPRK regarded wealthy Protestants as the exploiting class who oppressed the poor Korean people based on pre-modern feudalistic system, which should be repudiated.

Second, Protestantism is not originally a Korean but a western religion. It came from different countries, and believed by different ethnic people. Furthermore, as discussed in

Chapter Three, Protestantism was broadly recognised as an American national religion by the Korean people during the colonial period, who regarded Americans as their bitter enemy. The DPRK also argued that American Imperialism misused Protestantism as a tool for invasion. These features of Protestantism run counter to nationalism and anti-imperialism in Juche idea. For these reasons, the Modern [North] Korean Dictionary published in 1972 defined Protestantism as follows:

A religion which originated in Europe based on the belief in Jesus. Their preaching rationalises social inequality and exploitation of old societies. It is divided into several denominations, but all of them function as a spiritual tool for the ruling class to perpetuate the exploitation system (the Social Science Institute, 1972)

In brief, the normative values embodied within the Juche idea – revolutionary, anti-imperial, and nationalist cultures – are the result of a complex process consolidating the unique nationalism of North Korea concentrating on blood relations and ethnic homogeneity, thereby reasserting their national pride. By promoting these values, the DPRK pursued the removal of all traces of Japanese colonialism and the defence against American imperialism. Basically, these values of Juche were incompatible with Protestantism due to the North Korean people's perception of this religion as a culture coming from a feudalistic, foreign and imperialist tradition. Based on this, the next section will further explore the way in which the DPRK's explicit cultural policy promoted anti-Protestantism before the 1970s.

Chapter 4.2. Explicit Juche Cultural Policies: Anti-Protestantism before the Establishment of the KCF

This section looks at the linkage between anti-Protestant propaganda and the Juche idea before the foundation of the KCF through an investigation of official publications and artistic works of the DPRK. To examine this, this section looks at the DPRK's explicit cultural policy. As conceptualised in Chapter One, the term 'explicit cultural policy' here is defined as any policy for the cultural sector explicitly categorised by a government (Ahearne, 2009). This term also corresponds to 'nationwide culture' termed by Gramsci. As discussed in Chapter Two, Gramsci claimed that the development of a new culture at a national level was one of the essential elements for gaining hegemony, which contained new ethical standards and new conception of the world. In order to propagate this new cultural value throughout the nation, the government's intervention was required. Therefore, cultural policy at the national level can be defined as the government's strategy for inculcating new normative-ethical values into the people.

This Gramscian idea can be seen in North Korea's policies with the Juche idea in the cultural sphere. In North Korea, the DPRK regime's official statement clarifies that the ultimate goal of its cultural policy is to inculcate Juche into citizen's lives ranging from the workplace to the home (Park, 1985). Through an investigation of books, films, and plays dealing with Protestantism published or produced in the 1970s under Juche policy directions, this section shows the DPRK's ideological-political perspective on Protestantism.

Anti-Religious Propaganda in Marxist-Leninist Tradition

Between the 1950s and 1970s, the KWP's criticism of Protestantism was still based on Marxist-Leninist theory rather than on the Juche idea, like other socialist countries. In 1958, the Executive Committee of the KWP Central Committee undertook the continuing work for 'the struggle against anti-revolutionary movements', including religious activities. Following this agenda, a number of anti-religious propaganda books based on Marxism-Leninism were intensively published in 1959.

Table 12: The KWP's Tracts for Anti-Religious Propaganda Published in 1959
(Source: Song, 2008)

Year	Author	Title	Press
1959	Jung Ha-chol	<i>Why do we oppose religion?</i>	Korean Workers' Party Press
	Kim Hui-il	<i>Opium of the people</i>	Mincheong Press
	Roh Jae-sun	<i>Religion is the opium of the people</i>	Mincheong Press
	Roh Jae-sun	<i>American Imperialism misuses religion as a tool for invasion</i>	Korean Workers' Party Press
	Baek Won-kyu	<i>The Reactionary View of Religious Ethics</i>	Mincheong Press

In *Why Do We Oppose Religion?* (1959), Jung Ha-Cheol, a North Korean theorist, criticised the anti-revolutionary and feudalistic propensity of Christianity against communism as well as its unscientific characteristics: 'Religions educate an escape from reality and a servile spirit to the people. It is not difficult to see how these kinds of preaching are valuable in exploiting class' (Jung, 1959, quoted in Koh, 1988:349).

The ground theory of negative definition of religions in the DPRK was also conveyed in the book, *Dialectical Materialism and Historical Materialism* (1962). In this book, the KWP

regarded religion as an aspect of formulated social consciousness:

What is religion? Religion is one of the forms of social consciousness formulated in reflection of the distorted reality by the people's illusion. That is, religion means the worship of God, which does not exist in reality. [...] Based on Marxism-Leninism, the Party decisively opposes religion, which is the opium of the people, hampering social and scientific progress (Anonymous, 1962:320-326).

Basically, these publications for anti-religious propaganda had a tendency to go along with the original Marxist-Leninist ideas: religion – not only Protestantism but also other traditional religions – as a bourgeois concern and unscientific world-view, and thus it was seen to lead to the loss of class-consciousness, (i.e., 'religion is the opium of the people'); furthermore, historically, religion was an effective means of feudal exploitation in the pre-modern era, and even since modernity, it still functioned as an ideological tool for imperialist invasion; therefore, the job of the Party representing the working labour must be to liberate the labour from 'the witchery of religion' against rationalist progress (Marx, 1875/1970).

Following these publications, the DPRK government achieved national publication projects of a variety of dictionaries reflecting the Juche idea in the 1970s: *The Dictionary of Philosophy* [*Cheolhak sajeon*] (The Social Science Institute, 1970), *the History Dictionary* [*Ryeoksa sajeon*] (The Social Science Institute, 1971), *the Dictionary of Culture and Arts* [*Munhwa yesul sajeon*] (The Social Science Institute, 1972), and *the Politics Dictionary* [*Jeongchihak sajeon*] (the Academy of Politics in Social Science Institute, 1973). These

publications were undertaken as part of cultural policy for the purpose of standardising, representing, and inculcating the official knowledge into the citizens according to governmental discourse. In these dictionaries, a similar ground of anti-religious propaganda can be found. For example, the Modern Korean Dictionary [*Hyeondae joseonmal daesajeon*] (1972), the term religion was defined as follows:

The reactionary world view or organisation with a belief in the existence of a supernatural or superhuman being that dominates the whole of nature and mankind. Their sermons claim blind faith in and reliance on it with emphasis on the afterlife. Religion can be diversely categorised according to what and how people believe. As an unrealistic and mistaken awareness, religions were historically used as a tool of exploiting and suppressing the people, and particularly, as an ideological tool for imperialists to invade less developed countries in recent centuries (The Social Science Institute, 1972).

In the definition, we can see all kinds of counter-elements to the Juche idea: passiveness, pro-feudalism, and pro-imperialism.

Anti-Americanism

Compared with other religions, North Korean anti-religious perspective on Protestantism has been much more nuanced in combining with a strong anti-Americanism since the Korean War. Among all religions, the relationship between the KWP and Korean Protestantism was particularly distinct from that in the Soviet and Eastern Europe. First, regarding its relatively

short history of Protestantism, the North Korean religious sphere was different from other Soviet satellite states which were established on the time-honoured Christian tradition. Second, North Korea's antagonistic relationship with the US, caused by the division of Korean Peninsula, also established a negative perception of Protestantism among North Koreans, who perceived Protestantism as an American religion. Furthermore, the KWP had an experience of the sanguinary collision with Korean Protestants under the strong influence of American Evangelism in nation building, as stated in Chapter Three. With the traumatic experience of the Korean War, antagonism toward Protestantism reached its climax in parallel with the anti-American atmosphere.

In particular, the anti-Christian propaganda in association with anti-Americanism was implemented through the Juche cultural policy, which was used by the regime to draw attention to the refinement of citizens through literature, films, and lectures, rather than through punishment. Hostility toward American missionaries greatly intensified through major literary and artistic works between the 1960s and 1970s, such as *Choi Hak Shin's Family* (1967/film), *Shrine for a Shamanistic God* (1978/theatre), *Thousand Miles of Learning* (1974/novel), *The Life of an Old Bellman* (1974/novel), and *the Flower-Selling Girl* (1972/film). Also, the exhibits in war museums founded in each region, including Sincheon Massacre Memorial Museum, were focusing on the connection between the US force's brutality and their missionaries.

These works and museums were intentionally created under governmental influence to propagate anti-Christian sentiments (in accordance with anti-Americanism). A salient feature

of the Juche cultural policy in these works was the arousal of animosity toward American missionaries. They commonly described American missionaries as agents of American imperialism, schools and hospitals founded by American Protestant Churches as ideological propaganda institutions for pro-American imperialism. They particularly stressed the atrocities of the US forces in ruthlessly pursuing their national interests in the guise of Christian philanthropy.

Concerning this aspect, the DPRK film *Choi Hak Shin's Family*, released in 1967, can be a suitable example combining anti-Protestantism and anti-American propaganda by the DPRK regime. It tells the story of the experience of conversion of a Protestant pastor's family in Pyongyang from devout Christians to communists due to the US army's brutal treatment of the Korean people during the Korean War. In the film, one American Protestant missionary, who arrives at Pyongyang with the US army during the Korean War, pretentiously mentions that they are a benevolent spirit and liberal, ascribing their humanitarianism to their Christian belief. However, at the same time, the US commander said in the film that the main purpose of the Korean War is to secure the Korean Peninsula as an American military base. For this purpose, the Americans justified their deceptive use of Christian missionaries in Korea.

Furthermore, this film shows a sharp contrast between the cruelty of American invasion and the unprotected North Korean villagers. Ultimately, central to this contrasting description is the moral question of the war; that is, 'the question of which side of the bipolarised human community was more responsible for bringing about the order and engendering political and military crisis' (Kwon, 2011:80). Also, American Protestantism, intertwined with the bipolar

conflict in a violent form, is not able to escape from the responsibility of the bloody massacre of the Korean War.

However, with the film portraying the local North Korean Protestants as kind and naïve, the DPRK also emphasised that North Korean people's hostility towards Protestantism was aroused not because of the nature of religion, but because of its ideological function against the regime. Kim Il-Sung also highly esteemed this aspect of the film: 'this work is the best work that reflects the Party's policy. [...] It represents that the Party can associate with religious people, but cannot associate with pro-American dissidents' (Kim, J., 1966/1992:27-28). Kim's statement considers the possibility of religion being separated from its ideological function in favour of the US, and thus reflects the DPRK's accommodation of Protestantism in spite of its anti-Protestant propaganda campaigns.

Chapter 4.3. Transformation of the Juche Stance on Protestantism

This section examines changes in the Juche's perspective on Protestantism. Since the early 1980s, as the DPRK's anti-Christian propaganda became remarkably quiescent with the appearance of the KCF in the international scene, the Juche idea also presented a new approach to Protestantism that conceded the contribution of Protestantism, albeit limited, to the progress of mankind. This leaves theoretical and ideological space for Juche to

accommodate Protestant activities within North Korean society.

Through various international seminars, the DPRK consistently developed the Juche idea in accordance with Protestant morality. In particular, the Juche idea's receptiveness to Protestantism was theoretically elaborated through regular academic meetings between overseas Koreans and North Korean Protestants, entitled 'Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands' Unification', held between 1981 and 1991.

However, it showed a striking contrast to the original perspective of Juche on Protestantism between the 1950s and 1970s, discussed in the previous section. Concerning this change in the DPRK's national (Juche) culture, this thesis argues that it was as a result of the demand from the international Christian communities rather than that from the domestic society. In the late 1970s, as the KCF attempted to communicate with the overseas Korean Protestants and international Christian communities, international communities expressed doubt on the existence of the genuine Protestant activities in North Korea, since the DPRK was notorious for its totalitarianism and anti-Americanism. In order to build a united front with Protestants outside North Korea, who opposed to the South Korean government, it was important for the KCF to respond the demand from the international Christian communities. In this situation, the DPRK had two significant tasks to accomplish: One was to externally re-establish the ecclesiastical form (which was discussed in the previous chapter), and the other was to modify the theory of Juche to accommodate Protestantism.

To examine this assumption, this section investigates the communication between the DPRK

and international Protestant communities, the WCC and overseas Korean Protestants between the 1980s and 1990s, and then analyses the way in which the DPRK modified the Juche idea in association with Protestantism.

Why Did the DPRK Revise the Juche Idea?

a) The International Approval

As mentioned in Chapter Three, the first letter from the KCF to the WCC in 1972 entailed the human rights situation in South Korea suppressed by the military dictatorship. After that, the KCF sent more letters with the same issues and visited the WCC office in Geneva with the DPRK ambassador and Second Secretary (Brash, 1974). However, initially, rather than dealing with South Korean matters, the WCC displayed more interest in North Korean Protestantism that had never been exposed to the international scene until then.

As an ecumenical organisation, the WCC's approach to churches in the communist countries, particularly in Eastern Europe, was generous. Unlike fundamentalist-conservative Protestantism in the US, which consistently claimed communism cannot be compatible with Christianity, the WCC understood Eastern European Christianity as a time-honoured cultural tradition; that is, they paid attention to the socialist regime's grudging acceptance of Christian culture, since it was impossible to eradicate religious belief entrenched firmly in the people's mind despite anti-religious propaganda.

However, the WCC's approach to North Korean Protestantism was different from that to the

Eastern European. They knew that the history of North Korean Protestantism was relatively short, and that it disappeared since the sanguinary experience of the Korean War against the US. According to the WCC documents treating the KCF in the late 1970s, the WCC raised a question about the Protestant community in North Korea introduced in the KCF letters. Don Borrie, a Protestant minister and WCC member from New Zealand, who personally visited Pyongyang to attend the International Seminar on the Juche idea in 1977, took a pessimistic view on North Korean Protestantism due to the ideological-cultural barrier between the DPRK and international ecumenical Protestantism. First of all, he brought the idolisation of Kim Il-Sung into question:

From a sociological point of view, [...] Kim Il Sung plays a prophetic-priestly role within a secular state religion. The numerous imposing marble-lined state buildings can be described as cathedrals of the nation and the various musicals, operatic, and physical culture festivals are occasions for celebration and evangelism (Borrie, 1978).

In this situation, he perceived strong nationalism of North Korea, which restricted freedom of religion.

But [...] [we] must raise the question of religious freedom in the DPRK. The country's constitution does guarantee freedom of religious belief (and anti-religious propaganda at the same time). In practice, however, that freedom must not run counter to state loyalty, largely because the historical Korean experience on this score is a bitter one (Borrie, 1978).

In the several field investigations into North Korean Protestantism by the WCC in the 1980s, the WCC investigators repeatedly asked North Korean Protestants, introduced by the KCF, whether they felt a contradiction between their national ideology – the Juche idea – and their faith. In other words, these foreign ecumenical churches recognised that the actual existence of religious activities in North Korean society depends on the compatibility with their national ideology. In this situation, the DPRK had to clarify that the religious freedom and autonomy was granted under the Juche idea.

b) The United Front with Overseas Koreans and South Koreans

Another reason for the change in the Juche perspective on Protestantism was the DPRK's United Front strategy. To promote their national ideology in the international scene, since 1976 the DPRK has organised international seminars on Juche and established the International Juche Research Centre in 1978 for the purpose of supervising international Juche research groups over the world (Lynn, 1989/2007). Through these activities, the DPRK attempted to utilise the Juche idea for forming the hegemonic ideology in relation to the issues of the Korean reunification on the international level. As Lee Hy-Sang (2001) argued, the Juche idea was ultimately established aiming to winning hegemonic unification, which would result in the communist unification for the Korean Peninsula. In the international scene, the DPRK sought not only to gain assent from the international community to the Korean reunification led by the DPRK regime, taking an advantageous position over the South Korean government, but also to strengthen its ideological alignment with overseas Koreans and South Koreans who opposed the South Korean government; that is, to establish the

United Front.

At the 30th Anniversary Celebration of the Korean Workers' Party in 1975, Kim Il-Sung announced that the Korean reunification should not be influenced by the foreign powers but must be resolved independently by the Korean national people [*han minjok*], who were the masters of the country:

Essentially, reunification of our country is a matter of restoration of sovereignty at a national level⁴³ through reclaiming territories and people from the foreign imperialists. [...] For the independent and peaceful reunification, the national united front is required according to the principle of national solidarity. [...] Looking back on the past, all levels of society including communists formed a national united front on such a large scale with the aim of the anti-Japanese resistance. Likewise, both people in the northern part of the Republic and all sorts and conditions of men in the southern part, such as labourers, farmers, young students, journalists, *religious people* [emphasis added], politicians, must establish a national united front and come forward to struggle for the independent reunification of our nation (Kim, I., 1975, quoted in Lee, 1989:514-518).

Since the 1970s, the DPRK launched the 'campaign for overseas citizens' in order to attract overseas Korean people in the capitalist countries including Japan, Europe, and the US. The main strategy of North Korea's propagandistic activities with this campaign was to approach

⁴³ In this speech, 'the national level' implicitly ranged from North to South Korean territories.

anti-government elites who were influential in the Korean communities abroad. Also, the DPRK secretly contacted anti-government intellectuals and university students in South Korea, and asserted the moral superiority of the North Korean ideological system and the withdrawal of the US force from the Korean Peninsula, while denouncing Park Jung Hee's military dictatorship in South Korea.

In response to this campaign, there were remarkable pro-North Korean movements among overseas Korean intellectuals and South Korean university students between the 1980s and the 1990s. Most of them were also attracted to the Juche principles on Korean reunification; they agreed it should be achieved between Korean people, without relying upon the outside force or outside interference. A considerable number of the interesting figures in these movements were Christian intellectuals – both Protestant and Catholic. As discussed in Chapter Three, the DPRK paid attention to these liberal Korean Christians in the South and abroad, which resulted in the re-establishment of the KCF as a communicator with them. However, to embrace these Protestants under the Juche idea, it was seemingly unavoidable for the DPRK to revise a logical basis for the compatibility between the Juche idea and Christianity – both Catholicism and Protestantism.

This argument is underpinned by the fact that this revision project, in most cases, was undertaken in the academic exchanges between Juche theorists and the KCF members from North Korea and Korean Protestant intellectuals from abroad. As a part of the strategy of the united front, between 1981 and 1991, the KCF regularly held academic conferences with overseas Korean Protestants and scholars in Europe and the US to discuss Korean

reunification under the title ‘Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians Abroad for the Fatherlands.’ (Ryu, 1999; Kim, H., and Ryu, 2002). In these conferences, the relationship between Juche idea and Protestantism was treated as one of the priority subjects. Through their academic discussions over ten years, the Juche idea has been sophisticatedly developed in associating with Protestant spirits. Apart from these exchange conferences, the North Korean Juche theorists and the KCF members also presented the relationship between the Juche idea and Protestantism through several academic conferences, such as International Seminars on the Juche idea and the Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Protestant Scholars in North America held between the 1980s and the early 1990s.

Table 13: International Academic Conferences on the Juche Idea and Christianity
(Source: Lie, 1981; Ryu, 1999; Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002)

Year	City	Conference	Subject of Discussion
1981	Vienna (Austria)	The 1 st Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands	The Compatibility between the Juche idea and Christianity
1982	Helsinki (Finland)	The 2 nd Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands	The Juche idea, Christianity, and Korean Reunification
1987	Vienna (Austria)	The 3 rd Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands	The Juche idea, Christianity, and Korean Reunification
1988	Helsinki (Finland)	The International Symposium on the Juche Idea	Principles of the Juche idea
1989	New York (the US)	the 23 rd Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Protestant Scholars in North America	The Juche idea and Christianity
1990	Helsinki (Finland)	The 4 th Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands	The Juche idea and the US’ Domination of South Korea
	Stockholm (Sweden)	The International Seminar on the Juche Idea	The New Perspective on the Juche Idea on Christianity
	Beijing (China)	the 24 th Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Protestant Scholars in North America	The Juche idea and Christianity

In these academic events, the overseas Koreans, most of whom introduced themselves as Christian socialists in the conference, showed an academic interest in the way in which the Juche idea and Protestantism could coexist. On the other hand, the KCF was compelled to broaden the term ‘national people’ [*minjok*], applied in the Juche idea, from North Korean citizens to Protestant Koreans abroad and in South Korea.

The Approach of the Juche Idea toward Christianity

I must clarify that the term Christianity used here indicates both Protestantism and Catholicism. In terms of Christianity, although the KCF was established as a Protestant organisation, it had been composed of both Catholic and Protestant members until the establishment of the Association of Korean Catholicism in the late 1980s. Even after the establishment of the Association of the Korean Catholicism, in the revision of the Juche theory on Christianity, the DPRK never distinguished Protestantism from Catholicism.

With respect to the relationship between the Juche idea and Christianity, Koh Ki-Joon, a Secretary-General of the KCF, made a presentation in the 1st Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands held in 1981 as follows:

The Reverend Ki Joon Koh reported on the Church situation in the North, basing his report on his own experiences, and explained that Christianity and Socialism in North Korea share many common concerns. He said that “Juche thought” in North Korea and Christianity both emphasize the value of human life, service and love of humanity. He strongly witnessed to his conviction that the spirit of Christ, as willing help for the working masses, is reflected in the policies and systems of North Korea.

The so-called “confrontation” between Christianity and Communism is caused by the South Korean Government’s extreme anticommunist propaganda and also by wrong kinds of Socialism and Christianity (Lie, 1981).

We can find a similar tone regarding this issue in Kim Il-Sung’s autobiography entitled *With the Century*: ‘the Christian spirit, which aims at a peaceful world, is never contradictory to my Juche idea’ (Kim, I., 1992a:104). As mentioned in the first section of the chapter, the Supreme Leader’s instruction was the prime principle in the ideological system of North Korea in accordance with the theory of social-organism. In this sense, the revision of the Juche idea related to Christianity in the international conferences between the 1980s and 1990s seemingly proceeded from Kim Il-Sung’s guidance.

Indeed, Kim Il-Sung internally contended that what must be prevented in North Korean society was not religion itself, but its side effects on society, in the form of religious practice. For example, Conservative Protestant Churches in South Korea and the US encouraged anti-communist sentiment among their believers. His claim was not a reluctant step backward from an anti-religious standpoint, but an active attempt to find convergence between North Korea’s dominant ideology and the western religion that was once absolutely excluded.

To examine the revised relationship between the Juche idea and Christianity (including Protestantism) presented in the overseas conferences more closely, this thesis categorises the philosophical-ideological features of Juche idea into three elements: Marxism-Leninism, humanitarianism, and nationalism. In Gramscian terms, these elements can be seen as

common sense, or sentiments uncritically perceived as the ethical measure through the Juche idea. By analysing the way in which each element was interpreted by Juche, we can assess to what extent the Juche idea theoretically makes the accommodation of Christian activities possible within North Korean society.

i) The Separation from the Marxist-Leninist Tradition

As most scholars have pointed out, the Marxist-Leninist tradition internalised with the Juche idea was a major hindrance to the acceptance of Christianity in North Korean society. Indeed, as discussed in the previous section, in the early period between the 1950s and the early 1970s, the antagonism to Protestantism in the Juche idea was basically based on Marxist-Leninist tradition and on anti-Americanism. However, along with the DPRK's new slogan 'socialism of our style', which separated North Korea from Marxism-Leninism, North Korean theorists also revised Juche's approach to religion (including Christianity). Park Seung-Deok (1993a; 1993b; 1993c), a respected North Korean authority in comparative research between Juche and Christianity, frequently presented his study on religion from the Juche perspective at international conferences and in related papers, a contribution which presented basic outlines for further research on Christianity in North Korea.

Particularly, his presentation at the 24th Annual Conference of the Association of Korean Protestant Scholars in North America, held at Beijing in 1990, provided the key theory for investigating a comparison between religion and the Juche idea. In his academic article titled *the New Perspective of the Juche Idea on Religion* (1993a), Park attempted to distinguish between Marxism-Leninism and the Juche idea, bringing up some observations on religion

unnoticed by the former.

First, he argued that Marxism-Leninism regarded religion only in terms of objective conditions – i.e. the social-class system – going along with the elementary proposition that every mental phenomenon was a subjective reflection of the objective world. According to Park, despite the fact that religion distorted the phenomenological world, this could not be the only nature of religion; what Marxism-Leninism had overlooked was the capability of human being's autonomy. Unlike Marxism-Leninism, Juche did not focus on the acquired functions of religion but questioned the origin of religion: Why did mankind invent religion? From Juche's perspective, the birth of religion was fundamentally related to a need of human being for emancipation from suppression, exploitation, and inequality, which was totally opposed to Marxism-Leninism (Park, S., 1993a).

This understanding of religion from Juche's point of view had political implications. On the one hand, the DPRK theoretically justified its own religious policy which can be different from other socialist countries by claiming the difference between Marxism-Leninism and the Juche idea. Second, with the theoretical revision, the DPRK left room for accommodating religious (including Protestant) activities in practice within their society.

ii) Humanitarianism

Park Seung-Deok (1993b; 1993c) continued to argue that religion basically could coexist with the Juche idea, as long as Christianity embodied humanitarianism (even though it was accomplished through the relationship with God). The Christian doctrine genuinely asserted

emancipation of the poor and the oppressed from any kind of exploitation, invasion and inequality, and this aspect was combined with the Juche idea, which also aspired to realise a just society.

According to him, Christianity originally emerged among slaves and the poor in Asia Minor and the Near East suppressed by the Roman Empire, reflecting their longing for liberation and an egalitarian society. The origin of Buddhism and Islam had a similar motivation to Christianity, and even Cheondokyo, a religion native to Korea, also originated in the peasant uprising against the feudalistic social hierarchy as well as western imperialism. Concerning these origins of religion, Park claimed that religion appeared as an innate need of humanity among the suppressed people who aspired to be liberated from the ruling class (Park, S., 1993a).

To clarify the affiliative feature between the Juche idea and Christianity, Park classified Christianity into three stages according to its historical development: early Christianity, Christianity as a state religion, and modern Christianity. The first stage was when Christianity initially emerged during the Roman Empire, which deprecated tyranny and political repression against slaves and the poor, as stated above. The second stage of Christianity was when it was distorted by the exploiting class as the religion for the state. As a time of corruption and retrogression of early Christianity, this stage was what Marx and Lenin considered their object of criticism. Finally, the third stage, modern Christianity, appeared after World War II. There were some new Christianities as well, such as liberation theology, standing for the oppressed and supporting them to overcome human alienation caused by

capitalism.

These new Christian movements encouraged transformation to the way to salvation in religion. In other words, while conservative Christianity – the second stage of religion – aggravated resignation and escapism, underlining individual salvation in the afterlife, modern Christianity sought the collective redemption in reality encouraging actual participation (Park, S., 1993a).

Furthermore, within the Juche idea, he defined the leading figures of each religion, like Jesus, Buddha, and Mohammed, described in the respective religious doctrines as the absolutely perfect creatures that people pursued to be – a viewpoint in accord with Feuerbach's assertion in *the Essence of Christianity* that stated every aspect of God corresponded to the feature or need of human nature, treating God 'as a being of the understanding' and 'as a moral being or law' (Giddens, 1971). Park claimed that, in spite of the God-centric worldview, religion had more humane aspects concerned with human's life in reality than materialism or idealism did, which mainly focused on the abstract world such as the true meaning of existence, the ground of being, or the ultimate truth (Park, S., 1993a).

iii) Nationalism: A Shared Value between Protestantism and the Juche Idea

On the matter of religion, the DPRK has indicated a strong nationalist priority over socialist idealism from the beginning. For Kim Il-Sung, the main principle on religion was '[t]here is no God over the national people' (Kim., I., 1949/1979:285). This standpoint did not change even when the regime began to show actively its positive attitude towards religion. In fact,

with respect to religion, the crucial distinction of Juche from Marxism-Leninism was that the national interest was superior to the class system.

A national people will eternally exist even if the class system disappears in society. [...] Although the national people consist of different classes, social strata, and beliefs, national autonomy is of common concern to each member of the national people because they are linked with each other as a collective life (Park, S., 1993b:164).

For this reason, in order for religion to associate with the Juche idea, Part stipulated the condition that religion should reflect national interests: patriotism. ‘Religious people should not be availed of for the plunder of imperialism, but should devote themselves to the prosperity of their nation and the happiness of their people’ (Park, S., 1993c:194). Actually, this nationalist view on religion was already presented before the establishment of Juche. In 1949, Kim Il-Sung gave a speech about the desirable religious view for Koreans:

Korean Christians should believe not in others’ God, but in Korea’s God. Korean Christians should pray for Korea’s prosperity and happiness. As we can see in our history, a country invaded by other countries not only suffers from destruction but also from the loss of religious freedom (Kim, I., 1949/1979:285).

As mentioned in this chapter, national autonomy was the most important matter in the Juche idea, and both Juche theorists and North Korean Christians recognised that nationalism – or,

patriotism – was the common value shared between Juche and Christianity. At the closing ceremony of the Beijing Conference in 1990, Lee Sung-Bong, a North Korean Protestant minister, gave a sermon that stressed that devotion to one's own country and one's own people was a Christian duty. In this sermon, he referred to Moses's story in the Bible, regarding Moses as the national deliverer of the Israelites from Egypt, and his achievement as the realisation of patriotism (Park, S., 1993a). On the contrary, from the Juche perspective, Christianity in disregard of nationalism could be possibly distorted for foreign invasion which was obviously against the Juche idea.

To underpin this argument, the Korean experiences with the US in contemporary history were often given as proper examples. Koh Ki-Joon explained the reason for North Korean antagonism to Protestantism in the 1st Dialogue between North Korean and Korean Christians abroad for the Fatherlands held in 1981 as follows:

[Koh Ki-Joon] emphasized that North Korean Christians had believed that American soldiers were angels and saviours, but then during the Korean war had experienced heavy bombings and been subjected to inhuman activities on the part of these soldiers, all of which had then led to a disappointment in Americans and Christianity (Lie, 1981).

Also, Kim Il-Sung presented his negative view on the American Protestant missionaries' activities in the history of Korea in his autobiography:

For a long time, the US has dispatched missionaries in order to establish churches and improve the image of the US in the name of Christianity. However, these were hypocritical attempts aimed to expand their influence all over the country pretending to be sympathetic with the Korean people in a predicament (Kim, I., 1992a:173).

In this sense, Christianity was perceived in the Juche idea as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, some Protestants could contribute to nationalist interests; on the other hand, others could be abused for American imperialism. Certainly, Protestantism was acceptable in the Juche idea only if it was in accordance with the former.

With this ambivalent perception on Protestantism, which was different from a Marx-derived idea of religion as having a consistently negative role in terms of oppression and exploitation, we can infer two main points related to the Juche idea. First, in a multi-religious context, the Juche idea theoretically assumed that there was not a *single* Christianity that encompassed all Christian traditions across history and the world, but *different* Christianities founded in different historical and cultural backgrounds, even if some of the basic characteristics had remained constant.

Second, in regard of the combination between Protestantism and nationalism, the perception of Christianity in the Juche idea stemmed from the colonial period. In addition, in terms of an association between Protestantism and socialism, Park's theorisation was not entirely a new approach either in Korean history. During colonisation, Korean nationalist Protestants, including outstanding figures such as Lee Dong-Hui, Yeo Woon-Hyung, and Kim San,

maintained amicable relations with communism, taking the lead in the establishment of the Communist Party. Claiming that *Christianity must be socialisation while socialism must be Christianisation*, quite a few Protestant believers were eager to embrace socialism (Park, 2003).

To conclude, in respect to the idea that religion was regarded as a political and ideological tool rather than a faith-based institution, the Juche idea shared a similar perception with Marxism-Leninism. However, unlike Marxism-Leninism in which religion was unqualifiedly denied, the Juche idea provided a theoretical basis for its coexistence with religion (including Protestantism) in the name of nationalism, which stemmed from the historical experience during colonisation. Nevertheless, the Juche idea had some incompatibilities with Christianity. First of all, the human-centric world view of Juche does not accept the existence of God. Park Seung-Deok argued that ‘although God does not exist, the God-centric view of religion embodies the need for humanity – the realisation of autonomy – in a mystical way.

In this sense, religion has ‘a positive influence in a certain stage of historical development’ (Park, S., 1993c:186). That is, religion is ultimately an object to be eliminated and its contribution to society is only temporarily valuable. However, the more serious opposition between the Juche idea and Protestantism was caused by the supreme leader-centric government system in the Juche idea. Basically, because the supreme leader had an absolute power in every sphere, the existence of religion in North Korea depended on the extent to which the pursuit of religion was in parallel with the Supreme Leader’s power.

Summary

The Juche idea emerged as a branch of Marxism-Leninism in the beginning of Kim Il-Sung's regime, and coexisted with Marxist-Leninist tradition until the 1970s. However, as it evolved from a practical guideline to an official ideology, elements of socialism gradually faded out while those of nationalism crept in reinforcing solidarity and internal cohesion after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

In terms of religion, Juche had a different approach from other communist states. In the beginning, the DPRK regime showed its hostility to religion due to its unscientific aspects, feudalistic propensity, and as a result of the Korean War, due to the regime's anti-Americanism. However since the 1990s, the regime established a theoretical linkage between Juche and religion in a positive way. It was pointed out that Marxism-Leninism overlooked human being's capability of autonomy, and the Juche idea could be in parallel with the Christian doctrine, which genuinely asserts the emancipation of the poor and is against any kind of exploitation, invasion, and inequality. In other words, in principle, religions such as Protestantism can exist in a Juche society as long as they pursue humanitarianism.

Nevertheless, the North Korean government also claimed that national interest was a prerequisite for religion, a claim assumed to be premised on the ambivalent activities of Protestantism in Korean history. On the one hand, Protestantism certainly contributed to the nationalist movement for decolonisation. On the other hand, from a Marxist-Leninist perspective, Korean Christianity was also seen as an agent of American imperialism with a negative influence on the Korean people. In this respect, the Party regarded religion as a

means for political-ideological purposes, and Protestantism would be compatible with the Juche idea only if it carried nationalist characteristics. In short, then the KWP did not completely disapprove religion, but selectively accepted it depending on national interests.

The transformation of Juche perspective on Protestantism informed the practical changes in the DPRK's policy on Protestantism. It was, of course, necessary for the DPRK regime to display their new approach to religion in order to cope with the newly emerging religious movements under the government's limited approval. There were two significant elements that influenced the shifting stance of Juche on Protestantism. First, in pursuit of the international approval of the KCF's activities, it was necessary for the DPRK regime to show how the Juche idea is ideologically compatible with the Protestant spirit. Second, in forming the united front aiming to Korean reunification favourable to the DPRK, the DPRK was forced to modify the Juche idea in order to embrace overseas and South Korean Protestants who opposed the South Korean government.

In fact, the KCF's activities in the international scene mostly concentrated on forming the united front as a reunification strategy. In this regard, then, the DPRK sought to activate non-governmental public diplomacy with the international Christian society by reviving of North Korean Protestantism; that is, although the regime explicitly claimed to support the religious life of Christian citizens, its implicit pursuit was to build a bridge with anti-government Christians in South Korea as well as with western non-governmental Christian organisations, with a view to occupying a more favourable position in the diplomatic race in competition with South Korea. Having argued that the KCF's implicit aim was to contribute to the

DPRK's international relations and competition with the ROK, the KCF's activities in inter-Korean as well as international relations will be explored through a neo-Gramscian lens in the next chapter.

Chapter 5 The KCF's Policies towards Inter-Korean and International Relations between the 1970s and the Early 1990s

Introduction

Chapter Five examines the way in which the KCF politically contributed to the DPRK's policy on inter-Korean relations through its religious exchanges with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCCK, between the 1980s and the early 1990s before the occurrence of natural disasters in North Korea. Ever since the territorial division during the process of nation-building and the experience of the Korean War, South and North Korea have confronted each other ideologically, politically, and militarily on the international stage. The conflict between the two Koreas has attracted international attention due to its geopolitical importance in the context of the Cold War. Several problems derived from the hostile relationship between the two Koreas, including the method of reunification, the political legitimacy of both Korean governments, and the withdrawal of foreign forces from the Korean Peninsula, have been discussed as controversial issues in international organisations, particularly in the United Nations (UN).

Initially, the DPRK's attitude towards any interference by outside forces was hostile, contending that Korean issues must be solved by Korean themselves on the basis of national

self-determination. However, in the 1970s, the DPRK's policy towards international organisations began to change when the following external issues occurred: the Sino-American rapprochement, the hegemonic shift in the international milieu due to China's and the Third World's entry into the UN, and the change in the South Korean policy on Korean reunification during Park Jung-Hee's regime. In these international circumstances, the DPRK regime began to engage in diplomatic activities intensively. Particularly, between the 1970s and the 1980s, the DPRK's foreign policy extended to non-governmental diplomacy through participating in various non-governmental international organisations as well as consolidating their close relationship with overseas Korean organisations. Furthermore, the DPRK regime also came into active contact with South Korean Protestants, most of whom indicated a politically oppositional stance to the South Korean government.

Among these diplomatic activities of the DPRK regime, the KCF was one of the non-governmental organisations that attained eminence in religious exchanges, which will be paid attention to in this chapter. To investigate this, Chapter Five is structured in the following ways. Before a full-scale investigation into the KCF's policies in inter-Korean and international relations, the first section will present the political issues on the Korean Peninsula addressed in the international scene. This section will be helpful for understanding the political goal of the KCF's policies on non-governmental diplomacy.

Then, the chapter examines the KCF's policies towards the overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK in the second, third, and fourth sections respectively. Examining exchange activities between the WCC and the KCF could generally be categorised into three

types of events; field investigations into North Korean Protestantism made by Protestants outside North Korea, conferences on the issues of Korean reunification, and the official statement on the inter-Korean issues. Special attention in these sections will be given to the establishment of relationship between the KCF and Protestant organisations in capitalist societies, and to the way in which the DPRK took an advantageous position over the ROK on inter-Korean issues thanks to the KCF's activities in the international ecumenical society.

Finally, with the argument that the ultimate goal of the KCF's policies to build up a united front to counter the powers of the US and the ROK regimes in the Protestant sphere, the last part of Section Four will analyse the achievements and the failures of these policies in the international Protestant societies through the Gramscian lens.

As discussed in Chapter Two, Gramsci distinguished popular religion from official religion. While popular religion was close to experiences in people's daily life, which was fragmented and held by subaltern groups, official religion belonged to the dominant group and had a well-organised system which facilitated social control.

Gramsci continued to argue that popular religions could achieve a specific power of social praxis when they actively committed to social movements at an emotional and affective level. Furthermore, unlike official religions, which were assumed to be conservative and represent hegemonic power, popular religions could even establish a counter-hegemony against the dominant group by forming an alliance with radical political movements. Such an alliance would be grounded on mutually shared fundamentals and political necessities.

Applying Gramsci's concept of popular religion from above, this thesis cautiously argues that the KCF, in association with the DPRK regime, attempted to develop its power which can be effective not only in the religious sphere but also the political sphere, by committing actively to the inter-Korean issues. In this sense, the KCF's activities in inter-Korean issues can be seen as social praxis in combining its religious – and emotional – faith, aiming to establish a counter-hegemony against the US.

With this argument, this thesis will bring out two important points in examining the KCF's exchanges with the world outside Korea. First, the KCF pursued political tasks in the religious sphere, with the aim of gaining consensus among the WCC, the NCCK, and overseas Korean Protestants on the DPRK's policy on inter-Korean relations. The principles of reunification based on the confederal system, which the DPRK advocated, were as follows: the withdrawal of the US force; the replacement of armistice agreement with a peace agreement with the US; and the exclusion of the foreign interference on the issue of Korean reunification, grounded on the right of self-determination.

Second, to accomplish these tasks, the Protestant identity of the KCF was of foremost importance in building up the counter hegemony with the WCC, the NCCK, and overseas Koreans at an emotional level. In other words, what made the 'political association' between the KCF and the Protestants outside North Korea possible in this period was a sense of 'religious kinship' between them. Through this analysis, this chapter will answer the research question: Why did the Korean Christian Federation come to play a role in the DPRK's international relations, and how significant was that role?

Literature Reviews

Among the literature on the KCF, whether either written in Korean or in English, it is difficult to find a sociological approach to the KCF's policy towards inter-Korean or international relations before the mid-1990s (that is, before the natural disasters in North Korea triggered the international humanitarian aid effort). One of the major reasons for this situation came from the preconception that matters related to the KCF merely belonged to the religious sphere, and would thus be researched by theologians. On the other hand, concerning the issues of inter-Korean relations and Korean reunification, a considerable number of studies were carried out based on the idea that the two Korean governments were the only legitimate agents to deal with those issues. As a result, while many theological studies focused on the genuineness of faith, they overlooked the socio-political influence of the KCF's diplomatic activities on the discourse of Korean reunification, which were ultimately related to the geopolitical tension on the Korean Peninsula.

The theological approaches towards exchange activities between the KCF and South Korean Protestant Churches can be divided into two categories. One of them was literature written from the perspective of fundamentalist-conservative Protestantism, such as Yun Eun-Joo's article entitled 'A Study on Approaches to North Korean Human Rights, According to Mission Paradigms' (2012b), Kim Yeon-Joong's 'Analysis and Policy Recommendations of Missionary Work in North Korea' (2002), and Park Myung-Soo's 'Anti-Communism, Reunification of Korea, and Evangelisation of North Korea: A Comparative Study of the NCKK and the Christian Council of Korea (CCK)' (2009).

These works commonly gave a sceptical response about religious exchanges with the KCF, seeing it as a propaganda organisation from a totalitarian society where freedom of religion was restricted. They criticised the South Korean liberal Churches for pursuing religious exchanges with the KCF in spite of ideological differences. According to Park, although these churches' activities aimed to contribute to the reconciliation and reunification between the two Koreas, freedom of religion in North Korea must be considered prior to national reunification. This approach, however, shows an ideological bias in accordance with the Cold War discourse that sees communism as the 'devil's idea against Christianity' (Han, 1949).

The other approach prioritised the South Korean Protestant Churches' effort on reconciliation between Protestants in two Koreas, such as Park Jong-Hwa's article entitled 'The Religious Cooperation between South and North Korean Churches for National Unification: Possibility and Limitation' (1988), Park Myong-Chul's 'A Theological Perspective on the Reunification of Korea' (2003), Sebastian C.H. Kim's 'Reconciliation Possible? The Churches' Efforts Towards Peace and Reunification of North and South Korea' (2008), and Kim In-Soo's 'Towards Peace and Reunification between South and North Korean Churches: Contextual Analysis of the Two Churches' (2008).

These studies positively viewed the efforts of liberal and ecumenically-oriented churches (such as the NCCK) in forging links with Christian communities in North Korea, and in promoting a harmonious relationship with the DPRK regardless of their ideological differences. They assessed that these Protestants' exchanges between South and North Korean Churches would eventually contribute to the process of the peaceful reunification of the

Korean Peninsula. However, these authors did not show any concrete explanation how reconciliation between the two Korean Protestant Churches could be extended to national reconciliation. In other words, they stretched the meaning of religious reconciliation attempted within the religious sphere into secular society, based on insufficient and speculative evidence. Furthermore, while highlighting the theological reconciliation between the two Korean Protestant Churches, these studies did not analyse politically what the reconciliation had produced. That is, the exchanges between the two churches were generally represented by issuing manifestos, and, in my opinion, strong political implications advantageous to the DPRK regime hid under the religious mask of these manifestos. This aspect will be further discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 5.1. Korean Issues in the Context of International Politics

This section investigates first the conflicting issues between the two Koreas that have attracted international attention, as well as the changes in the international milieu surrounding inter-Korean relations in the 1970s. Inter-Korean issues treated in this chapter were closely interwoven with the KCF's policies towards inter-Korean and international relations.

Since the nation-building process, South-North Korean relation has been one of the most controversial subjects at the international stage. Particularly, rivalry between the two Koreas

has been clearly reflected at the UN, since it provided the legal issues and actions related to the Korean War and the Korean Armistice Agreement. After playing a mediating role in the process of concluding an armistice agreement to end the Korean War in 1953, the 9th UN General Assembly of 1954 adopted resolutions as follows:

Noting that paragraph 62 of the Armistice Agreement of 27 July 1953 provides that (1) the Agreement 'shall remain in effect until expressly superseded either by mutually acceptable amendments and additions or by provision in an appropriate agreement for a peaceful settlement at a political level between both sides,'; [...] (2) [the General Assembly] [r]eaffirms that the objectives of the United Nations remain the achievement by peaceful means of a unified, independent and democratic Korea under a representative form of government and the full restoration of international peace and security in the area (The United Nations, 1954, italics original).

These became the essential principles of the UN on inter-Korean issues. Since then, inter-Korean issues have been consistently discussed in the UN General Assembly with annual reports submitted by the UN Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), which were automatically placed on the provisional agenda of the Assembly every year until 1973 when UNCURK was dissolved.

Issues on the Korean Peninsula Discussed in the UN

Pak Chi-Young's book entitled *Korea and the United Nations* (2000) treated political and

diplomatic confrontations between the two Koreas in the UN since the late 1940s until the late 1990s based on the official documents published by the UN. According to this book, the inter-Korean issues discussed in the UN between the 1950s and the 1980s could be divided into two categories: i) Korean reunification and ii) the relaxation of tension on the Korean Peninsula (including the withdrawal of US military forces from South Korea). All these issues were not separate from one another but were intertwined. South and North Korea viewed them in different camps, their views stemming from the conflict of their divergent ideological and political positions. Alongside debates on these issues, the rivalry between the two Koreas in the UN in this period deepened, having been influenced by the rise of tension during the Cold War, in which Washington and Moscow both interfered in the dispute of the Korean issues (Pak, 2000).

a) Korean Reunification

From the beginning, peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula was discussed in the context of reunification, which was also the main concern for both Koreas. On this issue, the US and South Korea espoused the one-Korea theory; that is, 'one nation, one state, one government and one system'. Based on this theory, they contended that the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula should be achieved through free general elections under the UN's supervision in proportion to the population of the South and the North.

However, we can see two strategical implications in this argument. First, South Korea's approach towards reunification was based on the guarantee of the major powers. Second, the resolution was advantageous to South Korea whose population outnumbered the DPRK while

the DPRK was suffering from the loss of two-thirds of its whole population during the Korean War. Hence, if this election had been held, it might have resulted in the eventual dissolution of the DPRK.

On the contrary, the Soviet Union and North Korea claimed to leave the matter of Korean reunification to the Korean people themselves, to be settled without outside interference. Furthermore, the DPRK upheld the principle of reunification based on the confederation formula. Kim Il-Sung proposed the South-North Korean Confederation on 14th August 1960, calling for a Grand National Congress of representatives of political parties and social organisations throughout Korea, in order to establish a confederation of the South and the North. Kim revised this proposal as the Koryo Republic in 1971, to which the term ‘democratic’ was added in 1991, naming it the Koryo Democratic Confederal System. The DPRK’s policy on reunification was posited on the principle of ‘one nation, one state, two governments and two systems’.

Table 14: Comparison of Approaches to Reunification Between the Two Koreas (the 1950s – 60s) (Source; Pak, 2000)

Issues	South Korea (ROK)	North Korea (DPRK)
The Principle of the Korean Reunification	One Korea	The Koryo Republic Confederal System
Ideology of Reunification	Capitalism/Democracy	Communism/Juche
Process of Reunification	Establishing a unified government through free general elections	Developing a confederal system in a gradual process
Form of Unified State	One nation, one state, one system, one government	One nation, one state, two systems, two governments
Perspective on issues of Korean Reunification	International issues	Domestic (Inter-Korean) issues

b) The Dissolution of the UNCURK and Withdrawal of US Military Force

According to Lee Bo-mi, who wrote a PhD thesis on *A Study of North Korea's Proposal for a Peace Agreement in the 1970s* (2013), between the 1950s and the 1960s, the discord on Korean issues between the two Koreas was ultimately derived from the different attitude towards foreign influences. For example, South Korea accepted the competence and responsibility of the UNCURK, which submitted annual reports on the political, economic, and military situation in both Koreas until its dissolution in 1973. South Korea preferred to discuss Korean issues, most of which were related to North Korea's military threats, with the international community under the support of public opinion around the world – or more precisely, under the support of the US and western countries. As Lee argued, this was an inevitable choice for the South Korean government, because the wartime operational control (OPCON) of the South Korean troops belonged to the US, not to the ROK.

In contrast, Lee Bo-Mi (2013) continued to argue that North Korea defied the competence and the authority of the UN to deal with issues in Korea. The strained relationship between the UN and the DPRK could be traced back to the nation-building process; the Soviet's denial of entry to the UN Temporary Commission of Korea (UNTOCK) into the North, which aimed to supervise the general election under the General Assembly resolution in 1947. As a result, the UN approved the ROK as the solely legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula in 1948. The DPRK-UN relationship further deteriorated two years later, when the UN condemned North Korea as the aggressor during the Korean War (Pak, 2000; Lee, B., 2013).

Seeing that the US led the UN's action against the North during the Korean War, North Korea recognised the influence of the US and its western European allies over the UN. Criticising the US-western alliance, North Korea alleged that issues on the Korean Peninsula should be seen as domestic matters that must be settled between South and North Korea, and that any role played by the UN must be rejected, including UNCURK and the United Nations Command (UNC), the latter being the unified command structure for the multinational military forces placed in the ROK since the Korean War.

North Korea's belligerent attitude towards the UN was reinforced by Kim Il-Sung's proclamation of the basic principles of Juche at the tenth anniversary of the Bandung Conference on Afro-Asian Solidarity in 1965: 'Juche in ideology, independence in politics, self-reliance in economy, and self-defence in military defence' (Lee, J., 2000:128). Kim's proclamation indicated the DPRK's opposition to the foreign influence on issues surrounding the Korean Peninsula.

In the same context, according to Pak (2000), the DPRK also continued to bring up the question of the withdrawal of UN troops, weapons and equipment from the South as well as the annulment of their right to use the UN flag. In fact, the continuous US military presence in South Korea after the Korean War was considered the most significant factor in inter-Korean issues. The South contended that the UN forces had to remain on the Korean Peninsula as a stabilising factor, for it provided an effective deterrence against the North's aggression. On the contrary, the North claimed that the presence of US military in Korea rather aroused further military tension between the two Koreas.

Transformation of the DPRK's Policies on International Communities in the 1970s

According to Armstrong (2013a; 2013b), North Korea's policy on international relations, particularly on the western countries, changed dramatically in the 1970s. Since the establishment of its regime, the DPRK had almost no diplomatic relations outside the Soviet bloc in the first twenty years. As mentioned above, they had also sought an anti-UN policy that repudiated UN diplomacy. For this reason, the First Committee of the UN only invited the representative of the ROK as observer to attend the discussion on the Korean issues, and the DPRK claimed that any UN resolution on the Korean problem in the absence of a DPRK representative would be invalid.

However, in the 1970s, while maintaining good relations with the USSR, the DPRK regime began to receive recognition from international bodies as well as capitalist countries outside the communist bloc (Armstrong, 2013a). In 1972, Kim Il-Sung proclaimed at the 5th Supreme People's Assembly that:

Based on the principle of peaceful coexistence, we will make an effort to build diplomatic, political, economic, and cultural relationships with capitalist states as long as they adopt a policy of fair play towards both the South and the North on the Korean Peninsula without any intention of invasion (International Affairs, 1991, quoted in Ku, 2000:121).

In accordance with Kim's proclamation, the DPRK successfully normalised relations with states in northern and western European countries in the early 1970s, including Austria,

Finland, Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland (Jang, 2006; Armstrong, 2013b). In 1973, despite strenuous opposition from the ROK, the US and its allied countries, the DPRK successfully joined the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the World Health Organisation (WHO), the first of several UN bodies the DPRK would join in the 1970s (Jang, 2006). Following this, as granted observer status in the UN, the DPRK opened its UN observer mission in New York and Geneva.⁴⁴

Regarding the change in the DPRK's attitude towards the UN and western countries, scholars including Armstrong (2013b), Jang Hong-Chul (2006), and Lee Bo-Mi (2013), have pointed out two motivations in relation to domestic and diplomatic situations of the DPRK. On the one hand, domestically, or economically, as Armstrong (2013b) has argued, the DPRK's active engagement in the international system was necessary in order to attract trade and investment from capitalist states. Since the early 1970s, economic growth in North Korea gradually decelerated due to, first, their adherence to autarky policy, and second, the dramatic decrease of developmental assistance from the USSR and Eastern Europe. To overcome economic stagnation, the DPRK regime began to seek economic cooperation with non-communist countries. The Joint Venture Law in 1984 and the Rajin-Sonbong Free Economic Trade Zone (FETZ) were notable examples.

On the other hand, diplomatically, there was a hegemonic shift in international politics in

⁴⁴ The DPRK refused to join the UN itself alongside South Korea, even though this had been proposed by the Soviet Union in as early as 1956. It was not until the collapse of the Soviet bloc in 1991 and the recognition of South Korea by both Russia and China in 1992 that both Koreas would join the UN (Pak, 2000; Jang, 2006; Armstrong, 2013b).

favour of North Korea, according to Jang Hong-Chul (2006) and Armstrong (2013b). First, in the 1960s, a huge number of newly-independent nations in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or so-called the Third World, began to join to the UN. In the UN, countries from the Third World, most of which were freed from colonial domination in the first few decades after the Second World War, took a recognisable position; that is, anti-western imperialism. These countries initially tended to vote against the western position while supporting the communist bloc on issues regarding the Cold War (including Korean issues), often out of their anti-colonial posture.

Second, The People's Republic of China gained entry into the UN in 1971, the state that supported the DPRK during the Korean War and recognised the DPRK as the only legitimate government on the Korean Peninsula. Since becoming a permanent member of the UN Security Council, China raised its voice on behalf of North Korea.

Third, Sino-American rapprochement after Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972 developed a new international atmosphere of détente. In combination with the failure of the Vietnam War in the 1960s, this new atmosphere slightly reduced the influence of the US on the international stage. These situations brought about a shift in the UN system, from a superpower-centred tendency to a global sensitivity that considers developing countries more than before. For both Koreas, particularly, for the South, it was becoming more difficult to anticipate positive reactions from their allied countries on matters where they competed with North Korea (Pak, 2000; Lee, B., 2013).

Retreating from complete reliance on their respective alliances, the two Koreas ostensibly enunciated pragmatic policies towards each other as well as on inter-Korean relations, which led to the South-North [Korean] Red Cross meeting in 1971 and the signing of the Joint Communiqué between South and North Korea in 1972. The latter contained three principles for Korean Reunification: (i) the reunification should be achieved independently, without relying upon outside force or interference; (ii) it should be achieved by peaceful means; and (iii) national unity should be promoted (the United Nations, 1972). These principles of détente between Korea, buttressed the DPRK's political position on the domestication of Korean issues in the UN.

On the other hand, with support from China and the Third World, the DPRK consistently introduced resolutions on Korean issues in the First Committee of UN, calling for non-interference by outsider states, dissolution of the UNCURK and the UNC, and withdrawal of US forces from South Korea. In response to these demands, in 1973, the US-western states, in consultation with the ROK, proposed '(i) the South-North [Korean] talks (ii) a consultation among states concerned on the question of UN forces stationed in [South] Korea, and (iii) the voluntary dissolution of UNCURK' (Pak, 2000:18).⁴⁵ It was certain that these resolutions were proposed in recognition of the Joint Communiqué of 1972. In the end, the General Assembly dissolved the 23-year-old UNCURK in 1973, after South Korea accepted the consensus statement on the immediate dissolution of the UNCURK (Pak, 2000).

⁴⁵ On the other hand, the Soviet bloc and the Third World called for 'i) the dissolution of UNCURK, ii) denial of the right of the UN forces to use the UN flag, iii) dissolution of UNC, and iv) the complete withdrawal of foreign forces in Korea' (Pak, 2000:18).

With the dissolution of the UNCURK and entry into the UN serving as momentum, the DPRK continued to demand ‘(i) the unconditional withdrawal of the US force, (ii) the dissolution of the UNC, and (iii) the replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement with the US’ (Pak, 2000:19). On the other hand, the ROK and its ally proposed ‘(i) the devising of an alternative arrangement for the UNC’s dissolution, and (ii) the maintenance of the Armistice Agreement’ (Pak, 2000:19). Also, the DPRK government was opposed to joining the UN alongside South Korea, claiming that it would result in the permanent division of the Korean Peninsula.

In 1974 and 1975, the First Committee of the UN repeatedly adopted two conflicting resolutions. Considering the power configuration in the General Assembly then, a stalemate with two opposing resolutions on both Koreas could be predicted; that is, neither of the Koreas would gain the upper hand on Korean issues (Jang, 2006). Both North and South Koreas stopped bringing up the Korean question before the General Assembly since 1977, and as a result, Korean issues were not placed on the agenda until 1990. In this period, North Korea’s focus shifted from the UN to active engagement in the NGOs as well as to the establishment of the united front with South Korean dissidents and overseas Koreans (Jang, 2006).

Chapter 5.2. The KCF's Policy on Overseas Korean Protestants

This section investigates the way in which the KCF developed their relationship with Korean Protestants from abroad. The materials discussed will be documents from the WCC Archive on 'Dialogue between North Korean and Foreign Christian Abroad for the Fatherlands' Reunification', a series of Protestant exchange conferences between the KCF members and overseas South Korean Protestants, held from 1981 to 1991.

Most South Korean scholars, such as Kim Heung-Soo (2002), Ryu Sung-Min (1999), Ryu Dae-Young (2009), and Cho Eunsik (2008), agreed that these dialogues had historical significance for three reasons; (i) this series was the first official event organised by the North Korean Protestants on the international stage since Protestantism's disappearance after the Korean War; (ii) these dialogues were the first religious meetings between North Koreans and Koreans from other regions; and (iii) these laid the foundation for further Protestant exchanges between the KCF, South Korean Protestants, and international Protestant communities.

Despite being seemingly 'apolitical' conferences on theology, these dialogues ultimately carried political implications related to inter-Korean issues discussed in the previous section. This section argues that resolutions made at these Protestant conferences clearly reflected the political linkage between the KCF and the DPRK regime; furthermore, the political

perspective from these dialogues exercised a certain degree of influence on the later Protestant exchanges between North Korea, South Korea, and the international ecumenical communities, building a new discourse of Korean reunification grounded on nationalist sentiments.

Before investigating the religious exchanges between the KCF and overseas Korean Protestants, this section will first introduce the DPRK's policy towards overseas Koreans, for this thesis argues that the DPRK's interest in overseas Korean Protestants was a derivative of its policy on overseas Koreans. To understand why the overseas Korean Protestants were so significantly recognised by the DPRK regime, this thesis needs to examine the DPRK's perception of overseas Koreans as strategic partners for the Korean reunification.

The DPRK's Campaign for Overseas Koreans

The Nationality Law of the DPRK enacted in 1963, defined the scope of 'North Korean citizens', ranging from North Korean people on the northern part of the Korean Peninsula to ethnic Koreans residing in foreign countries. *The Dictionary of Politics* (1973) published in North Korea accounted for this law: 'the Nationality Law of the Democratic Republic of Korea defines the citizens of North Korea and is the law that regulates the procedure and qualification for the deprivation and acquisition of citizenship' (The Academy of Politics in Social Science Institute, 1973: 65).

The expanded scope of defining North Korean citizenship in the 1963 Nationality Law was

the result of a need to gain a new understanding of overseas Koreans in accordance with the launch of the DPRK's policy in the 1960s towards Koreans in foreign countries, labelled as 'campaign for overseas Koreans'. The policy aimed to maintain national identity through education, traditional culture and the performing arts, and to strengthen the relationship between the motherland and ethnic Koreans, as well as to encourage them to take part in various activities in the re-unification movements (Sohn, 2001).

In line with this policy, the definition of a [North Korean] citizen has changed. According to *The [North] Korean Language Dictionary* published in 1962, the term 'overseas Koreans' [Gyopo] simply refers to 'compatriots who live abroad with foreign citizenships' (The Academy of Science and Linguistics, 1962: 362). However, in the 1970s, the DPRK regime created a new term, 'overseas Korean citizen' in *The Political Dictionary* published in 1973, defined as follows:

Compatriots who left the country and wandered around in foreign nations due to Japanese colonialism in the past and now have become citizens of proud Democratic People's Republic of Korea, yet still reside in foreign countries (The Academy of Politics in Social Science Institute, 1973:1259).

This definition implied three ideas of the DPRK regime on overseas Koreans. First, in legal principle, the DPRK regime confirmed overseas Koreans as North Korean citizens regardless of their current residence. Second, from a nationalist perspective, they were, like Korean people on the Korean Peninsula, victims who suffered from Japanese colonialism. Third, and

extrapolating from the first two factors, they were obliged to contribute to the Korean reunification as (North) Korean citizens.

We can infer the origin of these ideas from Kim Il-Sung's and Kim Jong-Il's speeches. According to *Great Leader Kim, Il-Sung Comrade's Undying Revolutionary Achievement 18: Brilliant Settlement of Overseas Citizens' Problem* (1999) published by the KWP, Kim Il-Sung, the first leader who brought out the 'overseas Korean issue' in both Koreas, regarded overseas Koreans as minorities in their resident countries, discriminated against and forced to assimilate into the culture of those countries and suffering under inequality. In this book, Kim Il-Sung stated that

There are probably various different reasons and motivations for people leaving the country under the colonial regime; yet, these can be categorised into two main ones. One is caused by imperialist Japan's inhumane political oppression which usurped national sovereignty. Therefore, people who lost their economic ability and right to live left their motherland to wander around the world. The other involves political, economic and military reasons encouraged by the [American] imperialists (The Korean Workers' Party, 1999:16-17).

Considering this statement, North Korea categorised the emigration before liberation as survival emigration, and that after liberation as forcible emigration. In any case, Korean emigration to foreign countries was not seen as a voluntary choice, but as a result of the loss of sovereignty. Similarly, Kim Jong-Il interpreted the issue of 'overseas Koreans' as an issue

of sovereignty. Upon gaining a [North] Korean citizenship, he believed that national sovereignty would encourage overseas Koreans to continue their lives confidently anywhere with national dignity (The Korean Workers' Party, 1999).

These statements ostensibly indicated that the main goal of the policy was to protect overseas Koreans, who were victims of colonialism and American imperialism, by granting them North Korea citizenship. However, in his *Comparative Studies between South and North Korean Policies of Overseas Koreans* (2005), Yoon In-Jin, a South Korean professor specialising in South-North Korean relations, argued that the campaign was utilised for the strategy of Korean reunification and revolution against the South Korean government. That is to say, with this policy, the DPRK regime aimed to gather and organise itself for the leading role in strengthening the revolutionary ability of South Koreans, and also to build the foundation of reunification in terms favourable to the North Korean government. Through political, economic and cultural activities in their own resident country, the DPRK regime expected these overseas Koreans to ensure that the resident country would not make policies against North Korea, and that North Korea's foreign activities would not be hindered and be played favourably in the international community. Yoon's argument is underpinned by Kim Il-Sung's speech on overseas Koreans in the 1980s, which stated that: 'there are a large number of overseas citizens in America, and if they unite and work together as an organisation, they may be a great strength to the struggle for reunification' (The Korean Workers' Party, 1985:336).

In order to attract the overseas Koreans, the DPRK regime often held academic seminars and

cultural events as a way to build trusting relationships with them. Also, ever since the 1970s the DPRK regime has organised the annual cultural festivals in Pyongyang and invited overseas Koreans on the government's expense. According to Ohk Se-Cheol (1997), an editorial writer of the *Hankook Ilbo*⁴⁶ in the US, these apolitical opportunities provided by the DPRK regime contributed to attenuate the anti-sentiment towards North Korea. For example, the DPRK's invitation to North Korea was welcomed among overseas Koreans in the US, since forty percent of the total Korean immigrants in the US in the 1970s came from the northern part of the Korean peninsula before liberation (Yoon, 2004). In accordance with the enactment of the DPRK's Nationality Law, these Koreans could come to North Korea with North Korean citizenship, and to re-union with their separated families and to visit their hometown in North Korea.

What made it possible for the DPRK to carry out all these policies in accordance with its campaign on the overseas Koreans was the opening of the New York office for the North Korean Permanent mission to the UN in 1973, as stated in the first section. Until the early 1970s, it was almost impossible for North Korea to conduct policies towards overseas Koreans who lived in a capitalist country such as the US, due to the absence of an official diplomatic relationship with the US. Four years later, more opportunities to approach Koreans in the US were made available as the Carter administration lifted restrictions on traveling to certain communist countries. These changes not only made inviting Korean immigrants to North Korea possible, but it also enabled the DPRK regime to cooperate with pro-DPRK people in the US, which further helped develop actual policies towards Korean

⁴⁶ One of the Korean daily newspapers published in South Korea and the US.

immigrants there.

Following the first visit from Japan in the mid-1960s, the DPRK began to invite overseas Koreans in the US since 1977. Around three thousands Korean immigrants in the US visited North Korea up until the late 1980s (Ohk, 1997; Kim, Y., 2000). By providing them with visiting opportunities, the DPRK could establish a good relationship with Korean immigrants in the US. Then, the DPRK government encouraged these overseas Koreans to participate in pro-DPRK organisations in their host countries including Japan, the US and other western European countries. The two main purposes of establishing these organisations were to operate propagandistic activities against the ROK government in foreign countries, and to develop the political, economic, and cultural relations with international community in cooperation with the overseas Koreans.

Why Overseas Korean Protestant Leaders Gained Attention from the DPRK Regime?

In the process of the campaign, Protestant leaders in the US played a major role among pro-North Korean intellectuals. Between 1970 and 1973, several pro-DPRK organisations were founded in Los Angeles (Yoon, 2004), and Korean Protestant leaders played a crucial role in these organisations. For example, in the case of the ‘Comrade Association for the Nation’s Freedom Protection’, one of the pro-DPRK organisations founded in Los Angeles in 1973 with the support from the DPRK (Yoon, 2004), four out of the ten initiators were Presbyterian ministers including Hong Dong-Keun, Cha Sang-Dal, Kim Sung-Rak and Roh Eue-Sun. Several months later, Kim Sang-Don, a Protestant politician in exile and former government

officials of the ROK government, joined this organisation when he moved from Michigan to Los Angeles. In the fall of 1974, led by these Protestant ministers, several pro-Korean organisations in Los Angeles united under the title of 'Korean Congress for Democracy and Reunification in North America' (Yoon, 2004).

Lim Chang-Young, a Protestant pastor and former professor at the State University of New York, can be seen as another example. He was a former South Korean ambassador to the UN, but he moved to the US as a political exile following the military coup of Park Jung-Hee. After being in contact with the North Korean government, he was appointed the chairperson of Korean Association for National Reunification in 1977, the umbrella anti-South Korean organisation over the continent of North America.

According to Ohk (1997), the DPRK had paid attention to these Protestant intellectuals from the beginning of the campaign. These Protestant Koreans in the US could be characterised as follows: they belonged to the well-educated middle class and exerted certain influence on Korean communities with their high social reputation. This means the North Korean regime especially took notice of their social-ethical leadership and excellent organisational capacity in Korean communities.

On the other hand, in *Korean Diaspora*, Yoon In-Jin (2004) elucidated several reasons for overseas Korean Protestants' positive response to the DPRK's approach. First, the criticism at the South Korean regime grew among intellectuals, religious figures, and journalists, who migrated from South Korea. Because of human rights cases under the Park's dictatorship,

they were strongly antagonistic to the South Korean regime. In fact, some of these Protestant elites were former South Korean government officials who sought asylum in other countries. Furthermore, the DPRK's concern for Korean immigrants made an impression on them in contrast to the ROK's disinterest.

Second, during their visit, they could see for themselves the economic development of North Korea achieved through the *Chollima* movement. The DPRK's economic success in this period was rarely known to Korean people abroad as well as in South Korea, due to the ROK government's information control. For Korean immigrants, this economic success indicated the superiority of the North Korean regime over the South Korean one.

Third, international condemnation of the US government caused by the Vietnam War also influenced the Korean immigrants. In this international circumstance, they became critical of the US' interference in Korean issues while the nationalist discourse of the Korean reunification asserted by the DPRK gained more persuasive power.

Fourth, the religious identities of these Protestants were of interest to the Protestant missionary in North Korea, which was notorious for being an anti-Christian country. Furthermore, these Korean Protestant leaders in the US thought of their contribution to the reconciliation between the two Koreas as their religious duty, which would result in world peace. In any case, according to Ohk's observation (1997), these Protestants were not overwhelmed by the DPRK's political propaganda, but were attracted by the DPRK's nationalist discourse. In fact, some of Korean Protestants in the US with a positive attitude on

North Korea claimed that ‘honestly, we are not the ‘pro-North Korean’ but the ‘nationalist’ (Ohk, 1997:87).

As strategic partners for the united front, these anti-ROK Protestants were given a warm reception by the DPRK government. When they were invited to Pyongyang, not only could they meet their families but also the national leaders, Kim Il-Sung and Kim Jong-Il. Kim Song-Rak, a Korean Protestant minister in the US and member of the Comrade Association for the Nation’s Freedom Protection, was the first Protestant leader from abroad who met with Kim Il-Sung and discussed the Korean Protestant Church’s role for national reunification. Most South Korean scholars, such as Kim Heung-Soo (2002), Ryu Dae-Young (2009), Ryu Sung-Min (1999), agreed that this discussion became somewhat a trigger for a series of Korean Protestants’ visits to North Korea from foreign countries, and the ensuing discussion between Korean Protestants about reunification.

During their visit to Pyongyang, some overseas Korean Christians, including both Protestants and Catholics, were able to meet with the KCF members, visit house churches, and discuss religious matters (Koh, M., 1988). The visits made by these overseas Korean Protestants laid the foundation for further Protestant exchanges between the KCF and overseas Koreans. Eventually, the first ‘Dialogue between North Korean and Foreign Christians abroad from the Fatherland’s Unification’ was held in Vienna in 1981 with the KCF members, overseas Korean Protestants and around thirty foreign observers (Gim, 2011).

The Political Implication of the Exchanges between the KCF and Overseas Koreans

The first Dialogue between North Korean and Foreign Christians Abroad for the Fatherland's Unification was held in Vienna between 3rd and 6th November 1981, led by the KCF and the Council of Overseas Christians for National Unification, an organisation of overseas South Korean Protestants working towards the reunification of Korea (Lie, 1981). Following that historic first meeting, overseas Korean Protestants and members of the KCF held five meetings until 1991, in places such as Vienna, Helsinki, and Germany (Cho, 2008). Although these meetings were rarely referred to in South Korea, they 'were the first of its kind to have taken place in the thirty-six-year-long history of division since 1945, in or outside of Korea' (Gim, 2011:304).

Table 15: 'Dialogue between North Korean and Foreign Christians Abroad from the Fatherland's Unification' (Source: Ryu, 1999)

Year	Place	Discussion Topics
1981	Vienna, Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Koryo Republic Confederal System - Protestant attitude towards Korean reunification - National reunification and foreign powers
1982	Helsinki, Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - North Korea's reunification plan - Political-social affairs in South Korea - Juche and national reunification - Democratisation of South Korea
1987	Vienna, Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Anti-war and anti-nuclear movements - Withdrawal of nuclear weapons from the Korean Peninsula
1990	Helsinki, Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Juche idea - American imperialism in South Korea
1991	Frankfurt, Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reunification plan - Establishment of a reunification theology - Joint statement on Korean reunification - Non-aggression treaty, withdrawal of nuclear weapon - Entry into the UN as a unitary government

Protestant leaders from both Koreas and overseas Koreans were invited to the first meeting, but South Korea opposed the meeting and did not send any delegates. As a result, the meeting included fifteen Protestant delegates from North Korea, fifteen from Europe, fifteen from the US and Canada, and around thirty observers and journalists from the world.

This dialogue officially pursued mutual religious understanding between overseas and North Korean Protestants, which would enable them to find clues for the reconciliation between the two Koreas. After the closing of the event, reports produced by the participants in this dialogue demonstrated that they sought ‘a new awareness and experience of the fact that when distrusted and misunderstood brothers and sisters meet together and share fellowship in Christian love, it is possible to bring about reconciliation and unity among the people’ (Kang, W., 1981).

Although this dialogue represented itself as an apolitical event, there were non-religious participants from North Korea apart from the KCF members, such as Huh Jeong-Sook, the director of the Secretariat of the Central Committee for the Democratic Front for Reunification, and Chun Kum-Chul, the vice-chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland. Also, Ryom Kuk-Ryul, vice-president of the KCF at the time, was the vice-president of the Social Democratic Party concurrently. These participants revealed the political character of the event.

The delegates adopted the following resolutions:

Table 16: Resolutions from the First Dialogue between North Korean and Foreign Christians Abroad from the Fatherland's Unification (Source: Kang, W., 1981)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Our country must be reunited by Koreans themselves. The right of self-determination must be realised in Korea also in South Korea. There will be no equality, freedom, democracy or respect of the people without national sovereignty. US troops must withdraw from South Korea and cease all intervention. We are opposed to the proposals of a 'Bilateral UN Membership', which would legalise internationally the permanent division of Korea. 2. Our country must be reunited peacefully. The peace of the country requires that the 'Cease-fire Agreements' of 1953 be changed into a peace treaty, that arms be limited and the tension between the North and South reduced, that the Korean Peninsula be a free zone concerning nuclear weapons, that the Korean Peninsula be a territory of peace. 3. Our country must be reunited by a national determination to unite, which determination transcends the differences of ideologies and political systems. We must be united with the spirit of Christ and national conscience and respect for each other's rights. The present regime of Chun Doo Hwan must be held responsible for the massacre of Kwangju. The denial of human rights must cease. We express solidarity with patriotic Koreans who labor for the democratization and reunification of our country. We demand the immediate release of all political prisoners and we demand freedom of political activities 4. We have decided to dedicate ourselves as grains of wheat and leaven for the sacred task of national reunification, remaining faithful to the new experience and knowledge which we have gained through this dialogue.
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We can see from above that these resolutions mirrored North Korea's assertions in the UN in the 1970s: the unconditional withdrawal of US troops and the opposition to joining the UN

together with South Korea (Resolution No.1), and the replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace agreement with the US (Resolution No.2). The third resolution also condemned the abuse of human rights by the South Korean government. Most of all, Chun Kum-Chul, vice-chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland and one of the non-religious participants from North Korea, presented a paper on the Democratic Federated Republic of Korea, the confederation form of Korean reunification consistently offered by the North Korean government in the UN.

Scholars such as Ryu Sung-Min (1999), Kim Heung-Soo (2002), and Ryu Dae-Young (2009), who are in direct contact with the overseas Korean Protestants participants at the dialogue, argued in common that those participants were neither followers of the Juche idea nor espionage agents as the conservative Protestant theologians in South Korea had claimed. Rather, they seemed to be pragmatic reconcilers between the two Koreas who were grounded on common religious-ideological values; that is, Protestantism and nationalism. This aspect is in accord with Ohk's (1997) observation that the Korean Protestants in the US did not regard themselves as pro-North Korean, but as nationalists, as previously discussed.

In my opinion, what made these political agreements in this dialogue possible was the organic linkage between the DPRK's political purpose and Protestant ethics grounded on nationalist ideology. In the following, I will attempt to analyse these aspects from a Gramscian perspective.

a) Common Moral-Cultural Values: Protestantism

According to Gramsci, the development of common cultural values was essential for gaining hegemony, which would contain new ethical standards and a new conception of the world. The consensus of values can be achieved by communication between the different groups, which would be led to the elevation of those values to the 'national popular', that is, the standards of ethical behaviours (Gramsci, 1985).

In the dialogues between the KCF and overseas Korean Protestants, their political consensus was based on their common Protestant identities. In contrast with the accusation and criticism by the South Korean government and conservative Protestant churches, most Korean delegates from abroad were sympathetic to the North Korean Protestant leaders in this dialogue. Koh Ki-Joon, a North Korean minister, stressed in his presentation that the collapse of North Korean Protestantism was not caused by the regime's suppression, but by the US' attack on apolitical North Korean citizens during the Korean War:

North Korean Christians had believed that American soldiers were angels and saviours, but then during the Korean War had experienced heavy bombings and been subjected to inhuman activities on the part of these soldiers, all of which had then led to a disappointment in Americans and Christianity (Kang, W., 1981).

The KCF members who turned up in this meeting with overseas Korean Protestants were admired as victory of religious faith, having endured a long period of anti-Protestantism since the Korean War. Kang Wi-Jo, a Korean Protestant minister from the US, wrote about his impression on the KCF members in his report:

The Elder, Ryom Kuk-Ryul, made statements during his speech, such as ‘... our Lord who took the cross for the forgiveness of the sins of the world...’ ‘in the name of Christian brothers and sisters in North Korea...’ and other similar words. Also, during the meetings Pastor Kim Duk-Ryong, vice-president of the Federation of Korean Christians, was reading his Bible and carried his hymnal. These books were very old, probably published in the early 1930’s. I know how very hard it must have been to preserve those books during World War II and the Korean War. These were times of severe Christian persecution. Yet, that pastor still possesses his Bible and hymnal (Kang, W., 1981).

Asking the question ‘Why should we Christians outside of North Korea deny such faith and devotion which the North Korean Christians have?’, Kang Wi-Jo claimed that nobody had the right to doubt the religious identity of North Korean Protestants (Kang, W., 1981). The full engagement of North Korean Protestants in the Protestant services held during this event, including singing Christian hymns, prayers, and Bible reading, positively impressed not only the overseas Korean Protestants, but also the observers from the WCC and other journalists (Lie, 1981). As discussed in Chapter Three, the display of a proper ecclesiastical form was one of the ways the KCF could justify their religious genuineness and appeal to Protestants from outside North Korea. Through the WCC’s approval of authenticity of North Korean Protestantism, the KCF and overseas Korean Protestants established religious links with each other.

b) Ethical Measure: Nationalism

Gramsci argued that the establishment of a historic bloc was another essential element of hegemony, in which the ethical measure of coherence and identity would be provided. In this context, the KCF and overseas Korean Protestants shared nationalist sentiments as a common ethical standard.

Participants from North Korea implicitly condemned the US' interference on Korean issues by defining the Korean War as a conflict between North Korea and the US, rather than between the two Koreas. In addition, Koreans in this dialogue, whether from the North or the South, recognised in common that the division of the Korean Peninsula was derived not from their own decision, but from international super powers – the US and the former USSR. In his presentation, Lie Young-Bin, a Protestant minister from West Germany, emphasised that the division of Korean territory resulted not from internal, national conflicts, but from the external cause of international politics (Lie, 1981). His argument implied that the current conflicts on the Korean Peninsula should be interpreted with the rise of tensions during the Cold War. He continued to argue that as long as foreign forces remained stationed in South Korea and continued to intervene in the internal affairs of the country, reunification would be difficult to achieve.

c) Moral Superiority over the Rival Government

Gramsci assumed that ethical leadership was a prerequisite for the successful establishment of hegemony. In its efforts to assume a moral ascendancy, the DPRK regime made use of the brutal suppression of anti-government movement in South Korea during the period between

the 1970s and the 1980s. In this period, a variety of matters surrounding the pro-democracy movements and human rights issues in South Korea drew attention from the international community – a situation that is very different from the current international attention on North Korea. Chun Doo-Hwan's regime, which seized control of the country by military coup after Park Jung Hee's dictatorship, drew international condemnation as much as the preceding President due to the abuse of human rights. In particular, the Gwangju Democratic Movement in May 1980⁴⁷, which resulted in the massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians, raised questions among international religious societies on the morality of Chun's regime.

Furthermore, the uncooperative attitude of South Korean Protestant churches towards this dialogue between the KCF and overseas Koreans brought out a negative contrast to the KCF's active participation. In fact, both the ROK regime and South Korean Protestant churches, the latter including the Lutheran Church in Korea, requested the Council of Overseas Christians for National Unification and the WCC (which was supporting this meeting) not to hold this event through several official letters (Weingartner, 1981). The closing comment by overseas Koreans in this meeting clearly indicated disapproval of the South Korean Protestants' anti-communism view:

[t]his meeting will be accused and criticised by South Korea. Yet the participants expressed the conviction that Christians cannot accuse every North Korean assertion of being wrong, nor can Christians hold to the belief that everything done in the name of anti-communism is acceptable in the eyes of God (Kang, W.,

⁴⁷ This was a popular uprising in the city of Gwangju, South Korea from 18-27 May 1980, against Chun Doo Hwan's military dictatorship. Chun seized power after the assassination of Park Jung-Hee.

1981).

d) Organic linkage between political purpose and religious duty

Gramsci (1971) argued that one of the crucial roles of religion was to establish an organic linkage between citizens and politics grounded on mutual religious ethics. By adopting Gramsci's views, we can see how religious duties and patriotic obligations can be organically interlinked through examining Kang Wi-Jo's paper on 'Christian Responsibility in the History of the Division of the Fatherland', excerpted from the dialogues between the KCF and overseas Korean Protestants as follows:

[Kang] pointed out that Christianity was first introduced into Korea in 1592 when Japanese soldiers invaded Korea and that [Korean Christianity] co-operated with the USA in its one-sided and anticommunist policy in Asia. This, among other things, helped to solidify the division of the nation. It is mistaken for Christians, who hate war and love peace, who respect and protect human life in the spirit of Christ, to contribute to the prolongation of the division of the country, which division disturbs the peace (Kang, W. 1981).

Implicit in this is the criticism of pro-American conservative Protestants from Pyong-An Province, who politically confronted the communist regime in the process of nation-building, and who supported the establishment of the pro-American government in the South separating from the North – an unpatriotic act seen from a nationalist perspective. Participants from North Korea and from abroad agreed that pro-American Protestants in

Korea not only contributed to the ideological tension on the Korean Peninsula, but also disturbed the peaceful reunification of the two Koreas.

Overall, this meeting should be treated as a historical moment in inter-Korean relations, since this was the first time when inter-Korean issues, which were treated limitedly between the two governments or within the UN, began to be discussed in the apolitical sphere. The meeting brought benefits to the DPRK regime, especially from the point of view of the resolutions, which called for liberation from foreign powers, solidarity between Korean Protestants, and positive understanding of North Korean Protestantism.

In spite of the condemnation from South Korean Protestants and the ROK government on this meeting being merely pro-North Korean propaganda, the meeting nonetheless motivated the WCC and the NCKK to pay attention to the KCF and the role Protestantism played in alleviating tension on the Korean Peninsula and in leading to reconciliation between the two Koreas.

Chapter 5.3. The Relations between the KCF and the WCC between the 1980s and the 1990s

This section looks at the World Council Churches (the WCC)'s ecumenical activities in their diplomatic relations with the KCF. As mentioned earlier, the first contact between the KCF and the WCC could be traced back to 1972, when the KCF for the first time sent an official letter to the WCC asking for support for the Protestant pro-democracy movements in South Korea. Since then, the WCC had made an effort to improve the relations with the KCF. Its interest in the religious sphere in the DPRK ran parallel with its concern for human rights issues and global peace. Paying attention to geopolitical tensions between the communism and capitalism surrounding Far Eastern countries, the WCC aimed to relieve the geopolitical pressure on the Korean Peninsula by initiating dialogue with the KCF.

On the other hand, as examined in the previous chapters, the DPRK regime sought to extend its diplomatic policy to non-governmental organisations through the Protestant exchanges, for the purpose of gaining an advantageous position over South Korea in the international milieu, particularly, in inter-Korean issues. For the DPRK regime, the Protestant exchanges were very useful non-governmental activity to build bridges with other countries with which the DPRK did not have diplomatic ties.

This section will examine the exchanges between the WCC and the KCF, and explore the way in which the KCF (and the DPRK regime) could be seen to develop a counter-hegemony to the US government in association with the WCC in Gramscian terms.

The WCC's Ecumenical Approach Towards the KCF

Since the end of the Second World War in 1945, as Nazi's persecution of Jews came to light, interest in fundamental human rights peaked among international society. As a result, shortly after World War II, the UN adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948 under the influence of the US, which aimed to achieve international cooperation 'in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion' (U.N. Charter, Article 1: Paragraph 3).

The WCC was one of non-governmental institutions that came forward as reconcilers in international affairs. For example, Frederick Nolde, a representative of the WCC and ecumenical observer at the UN, was one of the remarkable figures who played a key role in the birth of the UDHR of 1948 (Nurser, 2005). Since the Helsinki Declaration⁴⁸, the WCC expressed notable concern in disarmament, tensions between capitalist and communist countries, and global security around the world. 'The JPIC (Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) Process' launched by the WCC at its Vancouver Assembly in 1983 was one of the key examples showing how it attempted 'to engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation should be a priority for World Council Programmes' (Niles, 2003).

In the JPIC Process, the WCC decided to have a hand in inter-Korean issues, such as the

⁴⁸ The Helsinki Final Act – the so-called the Helsinki Accords or Helsinki Declaration – was an agreement concluded on the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Helsinki, Finland in 1975. Thirty-five countries including the US, Canada, and all European states except Albania signed the agreement in an attempt to improve relations between the Communist countries and the West (Turack, 1978).

reunification of Korea with the aim of bringing peace to Northeast Asia. This decision was the WCC's second action to be involved in the inter-Korean issues, the first one being the Korean War. At the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, the WCC made the 'Statement on the Korean Situation and World Order', in support of the Police Action in North Korea and characterising the Korean War as an invasion from the North (Kim, H., 2001:107-144). Due to this statement, the relationship between the WCC and the KCF had been hostile before the revival of correspondence in 1972.

The WCC's engagement in the inter-Korean relations was especially stimulated by the success of the first 'Dialogue between North Korean and Overseas Korean Protestants for the Fatherland's Unification', discussed in the previous section. According to the WCC's archival materials, the WCC was encouraged enough by the achievement of this meeting to 'take a leading role in moving on some initiative' for further inter-Korean relations and 'some concrete ideas are being floated among our friends' (Weingartner, 1982). Exploring possibilities of improving relations with the KCF in 1984, the WCC invited the KCF to the International Christian Conference for Peace and Justice in North-East Asia in Tozanso, Japan, which was exceptionally organised with 65 Church leaders from 25 countries to discuss the issue of peaceful reunification of the two Koreas. With this conference, the WCC initiated the so-called 'Toazanso Process' as follows:

Table 17: Tozanso Conclusions (Source: Weingartner, 1985:4-5)

1. Peace and Justice in North-East Asia is a concern and responsibility of the whole ecumenical family. This is the more true because the issues are not merely local in scope. They have been caused, aggravated and continue to be influenced by outside forces. Solutions to the grave problems of peace and justice in that region will have to take into account regional and global relationships.
2. At the heart of the conflicts is the divided Korean peninsula. It has remained one of the most abrasive points on the dividing line between the world's two major ideological and military blocs and is rapidly becoming the most unstable, considering the large number of nuclear weapons on its soil and in its neighbourhood.
3. The issue of Korean reunification is above all a matter for the people of Korea themselves to decide. What the ecumenical community can contribute is solidarity, prayer and sustenance for those Koreans who are struggling for justice and peace.
4. Tozanso recognised a strong ideological component in the conflict. It distorts perceptions and contributes to a displacement of priorities. In a section entitled 'Overcoming Enemy Images', the report states that 'particular attention needs to be given in this region to overcoming stereotypes, prejudice, imposed enemy-images, inflammatory anti-imperialistic rhetoric and facile anti-communism which do not recognise the humanity of the opposing side.'
5. On the basis of the previous assumptions, Tozanso considered that the time was ripe for the ecumenical family of churches to take up direct contact with the DPRK.

Based on these achievements from the Tozanso Process as above, I will examine the exchanges between the WCC and the KCF.

What Made Possible the Association between the KCF and the WCC?

In 1971, the WCC Central Committee urged the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) to engage in intensive 'ecumenical reflection and involvement in the field of human rights' (quoted in Gort, 1995: 206). In the same year, the WCC produced the statement entitled 'Memorandum and Recommendation on Human Rights'. In this statement, they proclaimed that 'the attention of the churches will have to be centred primarily on the question of how best to implement [established] standards of human rights' (quoted in Gort, 1995:206). This proclamation indicated the practical engagement of the ecumenical churches in the secular world in order to implement human rights.

In fact, the WCC's active engagement in international affairs could be traced back to several international affairs and crises that took place during the Cold War in the 1960s, including the invasion of the Dominican Republic by the US, that of Czechoslovakia by the USSR, the Vietnam War, and the rise of repressive regimes in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The WCC member churches were commonly aware of these events, which threatened fundamental human rights including religious freedom, as a result of heightening tensions among the superpowers. For the WCC, inter-Korean issues were one of the typical and negative examples submitted to coercive systems of control by two super powers, which in turn perpetuated this division and were justified by it (Weingartner, 1985).

In its engagement in international affairs, the WCC's activities revealed certain approaches, characterised by John Nurser (2005), a fellow at the Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex. First, in order to solve a problem, the WCC sought a multilateral approach in

cooperation with other countries, rather than adopting unilateral measures by the US. Second, the WCC maintained neutrality ideologically and politically. Third, as can be seen during the US civil rights movements and the anti-war movements amidst the Vietnam War, the ecumenical church produced discourses concentrating on social and economic matters, such as gender equality, labour rights, or world peace.

We can find similar approaches in the Tozanso Process. This conference effectively elevated inter-Korean issues onto the international stage at least in the non-governmental sphere, and this elevation was facilitated by the WCC, the largest international Christian organisation representing over three hundred member churches in over one hundred countries (Weingartner, 1985:10). According to the NCCCK Archive, this was the first international apolitical conference in which international church leaders discussed the issue of Korean reunification (NCCCK, 1984a). In other words, the Process achieved a major forward step in improving not only inter-Korean relations but also the link between North Korea and the global Christian community, encouraging members of the WCC to be in contact with the KCF directly. Regarding contacts with North Korea, the Process recommended three components as follows:

First: That the WCC be asked to explore, in collaboration with the CCA⁴⁹, the possibility of developing relations with Churches, Christians and the others in North Korea, through visits and other forms of contact.

⁴⁹ Christian Conference of Asia

Second: That the WCC, in collaboration with the CCA, should pursue to facilitate opportunities where it would be possible for Christians from both North and South Korea to meet in dialogue.

Third: That the churches be encouraged to share with the WCC and the CCA plans for contacts and their results (Weingartner, 1985:5-6).

Following the conference, churches in the UK, the US, Germany (both East and West), New Zealand and Cuba have shown strong interests in visiting North Korea, and several visits to North Korea were made by committee members of the WCC in order to carry out the Process. In 1985, Ninan Koshy and Erich Weingartner, respectively the director and the executive secretary of the WCC's Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA), visited Pyongyang after an invitation from the KCF and the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea, one of the organisations under the KWP (Weingartner, 1985). One year later, shortly after the 6th Conference, where the statement 'Peace and Reunification of Korea' was adopted at the closing ceremony, five CCIA members visited Pyongyang again (NCKK, 1986b). Then, in 1987, Park Kyong-Seo, the director of Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) under the WCC visited Pyongyang for two weeks (NCKK, 1987b).

The more often members of the WCC visited Pyongyang, the more often the KCF members participated in international Christian meetings. Since 1986, the KCF as an observer Protestant organisation has dispatched representatives to the General Assembly of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches in Driebergen of 1987, the Central Committee meetings of

the WCC in Moscow of 1989, and the 6th Conference of the WCC in Canberra of 1991 (Kim, H., and Ryu, 2002).

Through these international exchange activities, the discussion on the issue of Korean reunification was successfully extended to the non-governmental sphere. By initiating the Tozanso Process, the WCC not only facilitated multilateral approaches to the treatment of inter-Korean issues with various countries, but also enhanced publicity on this issue beyond the limited political sphere of the UN, where the US and the USSR still exercised their political leverages on the inter-Korean relations.

Also, the Process marked the WCC's opposition to any interference to inter-Korean issues by outside forces on the basis of national self-determination. This approach reflected the WCC's consideration of the third generation of human rights, which includes the right of people to development and to self-determination, and the right to freedom from aggression. Pointing out that the division of the Korean Peninsula was a tragedy caused by influence from outside forces, the WCC claimed that 'the issue of Korean reunification is above all a matter for the people of Korea themselves to decide' (Weingartner, 1985:5). Needless to say, this view of the WCC on the Korean reunification corresponded to that of the DPRK regime, as discussed in the first section. In this regard, North Korea gained political benefits in its cooperation with the WCC.

The WCC's Approval of Particularity of the Religious Faith and Common Sense

Thanks to these visits by capitalist countries, the KCF could obtain approval from members

of the WCC as a genuine Christian organisation, an issue that is still controversial among international Christian Churches until now. The WCC has repeatedly stated the intention of their visit to North Korea in a press release:

There is a dual fact-finding purpose involved, related to the two inviting organisations. The first is to discover as much detailed information as possible about the Christian community which has remained in North Korea after the Korean war, during which most Christians fled to the South. The second is to converse with government leaders regarding the issue of the peaceful reunification of Korea and the possible role that ecumenical organisations could play in the reduction of tensions on the Korean peninsula, one of the most militarised areas on the earth (Weingartner, 1985:8).

In pursuit of the two purposes, during all their stays in Pyongyang, the foreign visitors from the western churches were allowed by the DPRK to investigate Christian communities in North Korea, such as conducting meetings with North Korean Protestants and visiting house churches and the Pyongyang Seminary (Weingartner, 1985). They were also given copies of the New Testament, the Old Testament and hymnbooks published by the KCF. On top of these Protestant experiences, they also met several high-level officials in the DPRK government, including the head of the Committee on the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, and discussed with North Korean scholars the issue of reunification of Korea (Kim, S. [et al.], 1989). Through these investigations, the WCC published the report stating that religious lives, albeit in a pre-modern way, were authentically maintained by believers

and clergy baptised before the Korean War (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002).

In this report, we can see that the WCC paid relatively less attention to the way of belief or the ideological background of faith. This presented a striking contrast to the conservative evangelical churches in the US, which put a lot of emphasis on freedom of religion – more precisely freedom of Protestant belief – as an essential condition for human rights. The principle of prioritising freedom of religion over other human rights sought by the US evangelists was not only derived from their religious background but also from their ideological orientation; they believed that religious freedom is able to catalyse the achievement of democracy.

However, the WCC's understanding of religious freedom indicated a counter-concept to conservative-evangelicalism. For example, the WCC's report approved in the Third Assembly held in 1961, stated that religious freedom must be approached against the background of 'Protestant-Orthodox relations, especially as regards the phenomenon of evangelical missions in Orthodox countries' (quoted in Gort, 1995:205). In line with this approach, at the 6th Assembly of the WCC held in Vancouver in 1983, the ecumenical church members shared a growing concern that the right to religious freedom, which was internationally recognised as a common moral value, was biased as a concept, based very much on the way of belief in the western countries. In this meeting, David Bosch, an influential Christian missionary from Africa, presented the argument that the western-centred concept of religious freedom demonstrated neither an understanding of traditional or contemporary concepts of religious freedom in other regions, nor knowledge of the unique relations between religion and the

state or between religion and traditional social institutions in Asian and African cultural spheres (Bosch, 1992).

According to Nurse's observation, this understanding of religious freedom on the WCC's part was due to the influence of secular humanism surrounding human rights issues, founded upon natural rights asserted by Enlightenment philosophers such as Grotius, Hobbes, Rousseau and Locke. In this discourse of human rights, the authority of religion – for example, as exercised by the Roman Catholic Church at the time of the French Revolution – was regarded as a social system that hindered cultural-religious diversity and the freedom and rights of the people (Nurser, 2005).

With the Gramscian framework described above, the WCC's recognition of different understandings of religious freedom depending on region can be seen as a challenge to hegemonic power. As conceptualised in Chapter One and Two, Gramsci claimed that it was common sense that revealed the prevailing cultural formation of a specific society. Common sense was used for propagating the ethical measure of a specific historic bloc. And popular religion – along with folklore, myth and tradition – was one of the meeting points of culture, through which common sense proliferated over the public and reinforced the condition of the subalterns. Through indigenous religion grounded on indigenous culture, the subaltern approaches a particular life-world framed by their common sense. If their ethical measure, stemming from their own historic bloc, does not correspond to the so-called universal value, which connotes the interest of the dominant group, their particularism will lead to a denial of universalism. In this process, as Gramsci (1971) elucidated throughout his *Prison Notebooks*

(particularly the 'Southern Question'), the possibility of counter-hegemony can be established.

North Korean Protestantism could then be placed in particularity with this perspective. The North Korean Protestants reconstructed the ecclesiastical order grounded on their own historicised culture; that is, Juche idea embodied by anti-imperialism, anti- Americanism, revolutionary culture, and nationalism, as I have discussed in Chapter Four. During the WCC members' field investigations in Pyongyang, the KCF members not only showed their small Protestant communities, which had a narrow escape from the Korean War and from national antagonism to Christianity, but also impressed on the WCC members, with the help of documentary films depicting urban destruction in the Korean War, the fact that the collapse of North Korean Protestantism was caused by the US attacks (Weingartner, 1985).

The WCC's recognition of North Korean Protestantism as genuine religious activities can be seen as a sort of resistance against the Protestant-Orthodox dogma that was promoted by the US hegemonic power and pervaded the world as standard Christian belief. In this sense, the WCC joined the KCF (and the DPRK regime) in establishing a counter-hegemony to the US government.

In this context, then, the improvement in relations between the National Council of Churches in USA (NCCCUSA) and the KCF was one of the most momentous achievements for the DPRK regime. Among western countries, it was the NCCUSA that stood out in its Protestant diplomacy with the KCF. They displayed a passionate interest in inter-Korean relations, and

acknowledged the US government's responsibility in the division of Korea. In the third Korean-North American Church Conference in 1985, they carried a resolution: The US Church, along with the [South] Korean Church, must take a joint responsibility for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula (Yi, 2001).

Furthermore, after visiting Pyongyang in 1986, the NCCUSA issued an official policy statement titled 'Peace and the Reunification of Korea' (NCCUSA, 1987).

Many of us [the US] Christians not only acquiesced to the division of Korea, but provided theological and ideological justification for it [...] Korea has suffered from the uncritical acceptance by many in our Churches and nation of the anti-communism which gripped our society hard in the 1950s and has kept it in its grasp to varying degrees ever since. [...] We confess our willingness or incapacity to understand the role of the Christian faith in a society like North Korea, or to comprehend sufficiently the witness to the Gospel of the South Korean Churches in their society (The NCCUSA, 1987)

This statement from the NCCUSA represented a significant changes in the organisation's attitude toward North Korea, since during the Korean War, the NCCUSA had espoused the UN's Police Action that defined the war as an invasion from the North and criticised it as '*de facto* disobedience to God' (Kim, H., 2001:123). This statement, however, showed apparent self-reflection on the NCCUSA's part. In this statement, the NCCUSA admitted that not only did the US government have a responsibility for creating the sustained division of Korea, but

the US Protestant Church also contributed to the moral justification of the US governmental intervention in the Korean Peninsula. Moreover, with this statement, the particularity of North Korean Protestantism predicated on the extreme nationalism could be justified.

The KCF's Diplomatic-Political Achievements through the Exchanges with the WCC

As such, by initiating the Tozanso Process, the ecumenical church members of the WCC could develop their relations with the KCF and even the DPRK regime as well. The political authorities of the DPRK accorded the NCCUSA members the treatment of national guest in their 1992 Pyongyang visit. As discussed earlier, since the 1970s, the DPRK began to show diplomatic flexibility by demonstrating an interest in its foreign policy to the western countries, including the US (Armstrong, 2013b). However, due to the distance to the chance for establishing official channels with Washington, the DPRK regime instead sought an amicable relationship with American scholars, journalists, and artists in the non-governmental area. From the DPRK's standpoint, the KCF's association with the WCC in this period was one of the opportunities to make diplomatic ties with the capitalist countries, and most crucially, to normalise relations with the US. Through the KCF-NCCUSA relations, Kim Il-Sung anticipated the NCCUSA's support for the restoration of US-DPRK relations (Kim, I., 1992/2010a, 1992/2010b).

Actually, the KCF-NCCUSA exchanges seemingly extended its influence not only to Protestantism in US civil society but also to the political sphere during the US-DPRK conflicts in the 1990s. The NCCUSA's exchanges with the KCF attracted attentions from other US Protestant Churches in the US. Regardless of their denominations, whether

evangelist or liberal, they began to make contacts with the KCF. Billy Graham, the best known of American evangelists and influential figure over the political sphere in the US, was one example. He went to Pyongyang with an invitation from the KCF in 1992 and in 1994 (Aikman, 2007). During his sojourn, he preached a sermon in the Bongsu Protestant Church and the Jangchoong Catholic Church, and gave a lecture about Jewish-Christian traditions in the US, titled 'The Influence of Religion on the US Society', to around four hundred students at Kim Il-Sung University.

What made this event interesting was that the motivation of Graham's visit to Pyongyang was not purely religious (i.e. belonging to civil society) but interwoven with the political activities. During the nuclear crisis in 1994, which turned into an acute conflict between the US and the DPRK, it was Graham who delivered Clinton's autographed letter to Kim Il-Sung during this visit (Aikman, 2007; Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Also, in the meeting with Graham, Kim Il-Sung even mentioned that 'a new spring is coming in the DPRK-US relations' (Kim, I., 1992/2010a:160). We cannot evaluate to what extent this correspondence between two heads of states influenced further negotiations on US-DPRK conflicts, because neither country have provided details of the letter. However, we can at least infer that both political leaders utilised religious exchange activities for political communication.

Besides developing the relations between the KCF and the international ecumenical communities, another important goal of the Tozanso Process was to lay a foundation for inter-Korean Protestant relations by making a bridge between them. In the early 1980s, the nationalist Protestant leaders in South Korea began to seek a channel of communication with

North Korea. They thought the South Korean government's monopolisation of the Korean reunification policy was misused for the prolongation of military dictatorship. However, due to legislative restriction of the National Security Law and due to governmental intervention, the South Korean Protestants were never successful in making contact with North Korean Protestants directly until the mid-1980s.

In this circumstance, the WCC and the NCCUSA actively arranged meetings for both Korean Churches in the international scene, claiming that geopolitical hostility in the Korean Peninsula was threatening global peace. This WCC's movement was caused as a reaction to mistrust of South Korean government as stated in the previous section. In this period, the human rights abuse by Chon Doo-Hwan's military dictatorship was consistently criticised by the WCC. Before the Tozanso Process, the CCIA, the WCC-affiliated organisation dispatched their delegations to investigate human rights abuse caused by Gwangju Democratic movement in May 1980, and a variety of matters surrounding governmental suppression on the pro-democracy movements in South Korea which drew attention from the international ecumenical community.

As a result of the Tozanso Process mentioned above, North and South Korean Protestant Church leaders met each other in the Glion Conference in 1986, the first time after a long hiatus since the Korean War. This Glion meeting between Church leaders from both Koreas was a significant event not only for Protestants but also for Korean people, since it was also the first non-governmental interaction, which will be discussed further in the next section.

Chapter 5.4. Relations between the KCF and the NCKK

As discussed in Chapter Three, building a united front with liberal South Korean Protestants against the South Korean government was one of the implicit goals of the KCF's policy. Holding on to this argument, this section looks at the impact of the exchanges between the KCF and the NCKK on South Korean Protestantism between the 1980s and the 1990s, focusing on its political implications.

In this period, alongside the active engagement of the KCF in the international ecumenical community, it must be noted that the international ecumenical organisation's interests in the improvement of inter-Korean relations did not arise from contact with the KCF, but from the pro-democracy movement led by liberal Protestants in South Korea. With the international community's attention on a variety of matters surrounding the pro-democracy movements and human rights issues in South Korea, this was a pattern different from the current international attention on human rights in North Korea. Such international interest motivated certain ecumenical churches in other countries to collaborate with their South Korean counterparts on human rights issues.

Since many Protestant dissidents in South Korea were arrested for subversion of the state, the WCC called an emergency meeting in Geneva in 1975 to deal with the issue. In this meeting, the International Christian Network for Democracy in Korea (ICNDK) was formed among representatives from the US, Sweden, Germany, Japan, Switzerland and Netherlands and

overseas South-Korean Protestants, and the network, in coordination with other international Christian communities, called for the South Korean government to release political prisoners (Kim, H., 2007).

These liberal churches in the South also constantly pursued communication with the North, with the aim to overcome geopolitical hostility through dialogue for national reunification. This aspect of the liberal Protestant Churches brought out a very strong contrast to the conservative-fundamental ones, which were the spearhead of anti-communist interest groups in South Korea. The DPRK considered these South Korean liberal Protestants as one of the partners for building an anti-South Korean united front that would eventually lead to a revolution in South Korea. Prior to investigating the exchanges between the NCKK and the KCF, this thesis will first present the historical context of the political-ideological formation surrounding Protestantism in South Korean society.

The Cold War Discourse and Ideological Divergence of South Korean Protestantism between the 1950s and the 1960s

Since the US Occupation and nation-building, it is notable that most Protestants who played an important role in forming anti-communism sentiments in both religious and political spheres were North Korean defectors, or more accurately, defectors from the Pyong-An Province to the South before the Korean War (Kang, I., 2009; Rivé-Lasan, 2013). As stated in Chapter Three, the political and social conservatism of the Pyong-An Presbyterianism, which stemmed from the influence of American fundamentalist-conservative missionaries, was quite an old and familiar phenomenon since the Japanese colonial rule. As much as they lost political and economic privileges under the communist regime, the exiled Pyong-An

Protestants settled down and built up power and lasting influence in South Korea.

Kang In-Cheol (2004; 2009) and Rivé-Lasan (2013) analysed the reasons the Pyong-An defectors could attain hegemonic positions in South Korea. First, the huge population and ecclesiastical authority of these Pyong-An Protestants enabled them to reorganise South Korean Churches. Second, they maintained solidarity after defecting to the South, whereas Protestant communities established in South Korea neither had concrete regional characteristics nor systemic solidarity. Third, the Pyong-An Protestants were already well represented among the South Korean elites due to their high educational and professional backgrounds during the colonial period. Finally, they were able to revive their connection with American missionaries in South Korea, which also meant close relations with the US Army as well as Syngman Rhee's⁵⁰ regime.

Due to their bourgeois status and the conflict with the KWP, they actively cooperated with the South Korean government to reinforce anti-communist sentiments over South Korean society. They justified their extreme right and anti-communist position by claiming that 'North Korea oppresses religion, but South Korea at least guarantees the freedom of religion' (Jang, 2004:139). In return for their cooperation, not only could the Pyong-An Protestants join the ruling class of South Korea, but they could also receive financial support from US missionaries who made a great contribution to the increasing power of the Korean Protestant Churches.

⁵⁰ The first President of the South Korean government

The Korean War led to the consolidation of the anti-communist stance in the South. As a result of the war, strong hostility to North Korea impeded the development of the left, and led ultimately to the obliteration of communism in South Korea. It goes without saying that the South Korean Protestants' perspective on North Korea was fully compatible with the government's strongly hostile policy toward the North. They provided moral justification for anti-communism – or more exactly, an anti-North Korean regime – by inscribing evangelical moral values into ideological practice. That is to say, by referring to the North Korean communist regime as not only 'the enemy' but also as 'the anti-Christ' or 'the devil', they presented themselves as the force of moral good triumphing over evil. Such an approach also rationalised the conservative Protestant Church's unilateral evangelical missionaries, which was the general tendency of Christianity – both Protestantism and Catholicism – during the Cold War (Han, 1992; Lee, J., 2007).

Despite the demographic, political and ecclesiastical superiority of evangelical fundamentalism, there was also a different movement within the South Korean Church. In fact, since the founding of the country, a series of schisms have taken place within South Korean Protestantism, each for complex and multifaceted reasons, ranging from the leaders' pro-Japanese activities in the colonial period to the financial misconduct of the church (Jang, 2004). However, the primary reason for each split could ultimately be framed as an ideological conflict, or more precisely, a struggle between evangelical-conservatism and ecumenical-liberalism.

In the process of division between conservatism and liberalism, in 1959, there was the

greatest schism in the history of Korean Protestantism. It was not simply an internecine struggle within Korean Protestantism, but was also connected to the ideological struggle between international Christian organisations, such as the WCC, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) (The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009). Founded in 1948, the WCC was actively engaged in ecumenical activities to unite churches that created political and ideological schisms through the two World Wars (The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009).

Paradoxically, the question of whether to join the WCC became the main cause of church schism in South Korea. The conservative-fundamentalist Protestants, particularly the Pyong-An defectors, who were affiliated with the NAE and the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), took a critical stance toward the WCC for its embrace of progressive theology and of churches in the communist states (The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009). Furthermore, in order to justify their pro-American stance, the conservative church leaders purposefully perceived the WCC and its relationship with the WEF as an ideological confrontation.⁵¹

As a result, when twenty-one members of the Korean National Assembly, sponsored by the conservative Protestant Church, publicly denounced the WCC as a pro-communist

⁵¹ However, according to Min Kwan-Hong (2010), a Korean theologian, it was in reality the WCC, rather than the NAE or the WEF, that was in rivalry with the ICCC, led by the extreme-right and separatist American Protestant leader Carl McIntire. The ICCC maliciously circulated rumours that the WCC was pro-communist organisation aiming to establish a super-church that ruled over all other churches (Min, 2010).

organisation in 1951, the issue was no longer simply a religious matter (The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009). In 1959, the controversy surrounding the WCC brought about the schism of Korean Presbyterianism, the biggest Protestant denomination in South Korea, between Tong-Hap (the progressive) and Hap-Dong (the conservative) factions. A faction's position on the WCC and on ecumenical movement was the decisive factor in the decision to whether support the Hap-Dong or Tong-Hap (Min, 2010). In the end, the division within the Korean Presbyterian Churches became a division within the whole of Korean Protestantism, with the conservative and anti-WCC churches gathering under the Korean Evangelical Fellowship (KEF) and the liberal and pro-WCC churches forming the National Christian Council in [South] Korea (NCCCK) (The Institute of the History of Christianity in Korea, 2009).

The Rise of the Liberal Protestant Movement as a Social Force in South Korea during the 1970s

It was not until the 1970s that liberal Protestantism finally began to have its own voice, advocating human rights against Park Jung-Hee's dictatorship. When Park took power through a military coup in the 1960s, he justified his dictatorial regime by insisting on two priorities: national security and economic growth (Chang, K, 2006). He claimed that his military revolution was unavoidable in order to stabilise the tumultuous political situation. Park also reinforced anti-communism (i.e. pro-Americanism) from the beginning, ready to maintain his grip on power by suppressing any kind of dissident movement (Baik, 2014). Later on, Park extended his anti-communist ideology to a growth-oriented economic policy; in other words, the South must hold a more prominent position and achieve a more advanced

economy and industry than the North, in order to overcome communism's threat over the border (Yi, 2006).

Given the situation, most Protestants, whether liberal or conservative, initially accepted Park's regime as a revolution that could solve the social chaos. At the first stage of his regime, Park had a good relationship with Protestantism, for it was then essential to earn the cooperation of the pro-American Protestants in order to gain the US government's approval. For instance, shortly after the military coup, two prominent Korean Protestant leaders, Han Kyong-Jik and Kim Hwal-Lan dispatched to the US as national delegates aiming to lobby for the US' support for Park's regime (Yi, 2001; Baik, 2014). The NCKK also issued a statement to support Park's coup: 'The revolution on 16th May was inevitable to escape from [North Korea's] military invasion and to reconstruct the state from the collapse of politicians' corruption and graft' (The NCKK, 1972:296-297).

However, at the second stage of the Park regime, he began the enactment of the Yu-Shin Constitution in 1972, which was a coercive constitutional amendment for the purpose of extending Park's dictatorship. A minority of liberal Protestant leaders then called for democracy and human rights, acting against the government, while the majority of the pro-American Protestants still espoused the regime.

In their strategic challenge to the Yu-Shin regime, the liberal Protestants attempted to form a covert organisation to mobilise resources while forging links with foreign Christian institutions. Among international organisations, the WCC was the one most concerned about

the struggle against political repression and human rights abuse in South Korea, mentioned in the previous section. Also, the liberal Protestants created a new contextual theology against the regime, a form of inculturation with the modern Korean populace, called the Minjung Theology. Quoting the Biblical example of the liberation of Hebrew slaves from Egyptian bondage, this theology argued that God acts in response to the suffering of the masses (Grayson, 2006). This theology emerged from Protestant concern for the social welfare of the Korean lower class and became a rhetorical weapon in the discursive struggle against the authoritarianism of the conservative evangelical Church (Kim, W., 2006).

From the Pro-Democracy Movement to the National Reunification Movement

Since the 1980s, the liberal Protestant force in South Korea shifted their strategy to the prioritisation of the national reunification movement, rather than the democratisation of South Korea. Yi Man-Yeol (2006), prominent South Korean historian, argued that the reason behind this shift was the National Security Act, the most powerful legal force among South Korean positive laws, enacted in 1948 for the purpose of restricting pro-communist or pro-North Korean activities. Its legal application covered a wide range of activities, from political movements to cultural activities such as music, art, and even religion. However, in practice, any kind of pro-democracy movement – whether pro-communist or not – was treated as a violation of this positive law because these activities against the regime threatened the stability of South Korean society, which could be beneficial to the North. In this situation, the NCCCK realised that extreme anti-communism was functioning as a mechanism for justifying human rights abuse by the dictatorial regime of South Korea.

Many scholars including Gim Dongjin (2011), Baik Joong-Hyun (2014), Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) agreed with Yi's argument. Particularly, with the Gwangju Democratic Movement in May 1980 as a momentum, seeing that the massacre of hundreds of innocent civilians was legitimatised under the National Security Act in spite of the rare possibility of relationship between the movement and pro-North Korean or pro-communist activists, the liberal Protestants began to suspect that the South Korean government misused the current status of the hostile relationship with the North for justifying its dictatorial system. So long as the extraordinary circumstance of ideological division between the states was sustained, the liberal Protestants realised that their advocacy for human rights and democratisation would be suppressed under the National Security Act due to its legitimisation of all kinds of government suppression on democratic movement. In other words, democratisation could not be achieved in South Korea without reunification (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002; Baik, 2014).

In this regard, with the implementation of the national security doctrine, the NCKK was cognisant of the fact that their pro-democracy movement and the reunification movement were two sides of the same coin. Thus, they decided to carry out the reunification approach in attempt to communicate with the KCF (Gim, 2011).

According to the South Korean theologian Park Myong-Soo (2009), South Korean Protestant Churches could profit from several favourable factors as regards their involvement in anti-government movements in the 1980s. First, since the early 1960s, Protestant population in South Korea expanded more quickly than in any other country, more than doubling its

number every decade. As the second largest religious group next to the Buddhists, their engagement in socio-political issues, including democracy and Korean reunification, became more visible.

Second, along with the university student movements, liberal Protestant Churches in South Korea were relatively systematic and well-organised as political movements, based on their experiences of campaigning for poor farmers and labourers. Throughout the 1970s, Protestants established a network of Christian social movement organisations in the name of the NCKK, which constituted various types of organisations in order to mobilise students, youths, clergy, the urban poor, labourers, women, and prisoners of conscience, and provided diverse resources to each group, including communication channels within the umbrella group and financial assistance for various organisations.

Third, while most South Korean citizens were legally forbidden to be in contact with North Koreans under the coercive regime that monopolised inter-Korean relations and the reunification policy, the liberal Protestant leaders could effectively withstand the government's monopolisation with their liaison with international ecumenical communities such as the WCC.

In addition, it is in my opinion that the KCF identified several common ideological-political aspects in South Korean Protestants' reunification movements, which motivated North Korea to start an affiliation with them. I divide them into three categories: anti-Americanism, anti-ROK government's sentiment, and populace-orientation of Minjung theology.

a) Anti-Americanism

First of all, anti-Americanism was aroused among liberal Protestants since the Gwangju Democratic Movements in the 1980s. From the beginning of the nation-building process, Korean Protestantism – whether conservative or liberal – had recognised the US not only as their religious motherland but also as the origin of democracy, as they had been educated by the US missionaries since the colonial period. They believed that democracy and freedom of South Korea could be defended by associating itself with the US, the most advanced democratic country in the world. For these Protestants, there was no reason to be opposed to the presence of the US Army in South Korea, which was emblematic of an alliance with the democratic world. During the anti-government movement in the 1970s, South Korean liberal Protestantism still maintained an amicable attitude towards the US.

However, it turned out that the Korean military committed massacres in Gwang-ju in conjunction with the US military force, and as a result, anti-American sentiments grew rapidly in South Korea during the 1980s. Liberal intellectuals as well as Protestants called on the US military to be held accountable for their action, and in the process, anti-ROK government protests were expanded into anti-American rallies (Kang, J. 2004). They began to regard the US military as the main culprits alongside the South Korean dictatorial regime in the current entrenchment of the division of Korea. The arson attack on the American Council in Busan in 1982 and a series of failed bomb attacks on American Council in Gwangju in 1980, 1982 and 1988, another failed bomb attack on American Council in Daegu in 1983, and the sit-in demonstration at the American Council in Seoul in 1985 were the

symbolic examples of the anti-American movements in South Korea during this period (Kang, J. 2004). All these incidents were led by the South Korean university students, including Protestant theological students (Kang, J., 2000).

Special Committee for the Institute for [Korean] National Unification, an affiliated organisation of the NCKK and the Association of [South] Korean and North American Protestants, organised in 1982 and 1984 respectively, were the first international gatherings in which the US's supremacy over inter-Korean relations was challenged and criticised by the claim that the US government was responsible for the division of the Korean Peninsula and showed affinity to the South Korean dictatorship (NCKK, 1984a). In the latter meeting, Kim Kwan-Seok, a South Korean minister and head of the international committee of the NCKK, expressed his disappointment at the role of the US government in its treatment of the South Korean government:

[...] A noteworthy feature in the US-ROK relations is the arrogance of the US' attitude towards Korea. The US recently gives an impression of relying more on 'military' power rather than on values of freedom, justice, or peace. This phenomenon seems to come from the decline of their morality and spirituality (NCKK, 1984a).

With this statement, the NCKK brought into question the morality of the US government with respect to US-ROK relations, claiming that, for the Korean people, the US government was not regarded as the guardian of democracy any more, but that of dictatorship which

suppressed innocent people. In this way, the demand to withdraw of the US troops from South Korea gained ground among liberal Protestants in South Korea.

b) Anti-ROK Government Sentiment

In pursuit of Korean reunification, the liberal Protestants' movement was destined to locate themselves in absolute opposition to the ROK government, which prevented citizens from participating in inter-Korean issues under the National Security Law. As mentioned above, the NCKK contended that the ROK government's dogmatic policy on reunification, which prohibited participation in non-governmental organisations, caused major detriment to bringing about peaceful reconciliation between the two Koreas, and argued that the entire Korean population, not only the government, should be allowed to take part in the Korean reunification issue.

In 1985, when the ROK government prevented the NCKK from holding conferences on the issue of Korean reunification, the NCKK announced these fundamental principles for peaceful reunification, standing against the government:

Table 18: The NCKK's Statement of Principles for Peaceful Reunification
(Source: NCKK, 1985, quoted in Han and Kim, 2006:241)

1. Overcoming the division of the peninsula will directly lead to achieving peace. The issue of reunification cannot be monopolised by the government but should be broadly shared with the Korean people.
2. It is unacceptable that either the South or North Korean governments avoid possible reunification as a way of holding on to power.
3. Korean Christianity aspires to democracy and justice on the peninsula. This aspiration is the cornerstone to overcoming the division of the peninsula and achieving reunification. Moreover, the central purpose of reunification is to achieve a democratic and just society, thus the reunification movement has to be democratic and just. On the basis of Christian belief that advocates peace in the Kingdom of God, Korean Christians declare that they have the responsibility, right the liberty to participate in the process of achieving reunification

With these principles, the NCKK encouraged Korean Protestants to break social taboos and restrictions against activities for Korean reunification, since sovereignty from God must be used for allowing God to judge every political system and ideology with His divine power⁵² (NCKK, 1983b). Furthermore, these principles presented an affiliation of religious mission with political values, that is, democracy. However, in Park's regime in the 1970s, these Protestant activists were accused of violating the National Security Law, as the ROK government framed Christian praxis as a political, and therefore, not religious, activity.

c) Populace-orientation of the Minjung Theology

The recognition of the Korean public citizens as principal agents of the Korean reunification

⁵² This argument was in accordance with Locke's philosophy that there was no legitimate government under the divine right of the King.

movement alongside, the government was derived from the idea of Minjung Theology. This theology was developed under Park Jung-Hee's military regime, which produced the urban poor and poor farmers in the process of rapid economic construction during the 1970s. It stressed the way in which the practice of Christian faith could bring hope to the dispossessed masses. Minjung theologians identified poor farmers and labourers in South Korea as the dispossessed suffering from the dictatorial regime, and proclaimed that the people were 'the proper subject of history and that understanding history is to understand God's work in overcoming the suffering of the people' (Grayson, 2006:22).

This theology contained a certain parallel not only with the Latin American Liberation Theology, which holds that religion must participate in the change of society, but also with the main subject of the Juche idea: an individual is the master of his/her destiny. Both Minjung theology and the Juche idea were formed based on common hypotheses: first, the Koreans are a suffering people; second, they are able to overcome their difficulties in reality by human efforts, rather than by relying on other-worldly theories.

Treating the issue of Korean reunification starting from the 1980s, South Korean liberal Protestants began to argue that the division of the nation was the origin of the exploitation, poverty and suppression, from which the Korean people were suffering. In a statement on the issue of Korean reunification in 1983, the NCCK expressed their religious stance as follows:

[...] In the past, the tragedy of our Korean War was derived from territorial division.

Today, under the pretext of political unrest caused by national division, the dictatorial

regime can still exert its power in this country. The Korean dictatorship brought out the maldistribution of wealth, which resulted in poverty. Accordingly, to overcome national division is to practice our faith, which will lead to the rescue of our people from a nuclear threat, from the political violence of dictatorship, and from abject poverty (NCKK, 1983b).

The affinity between Minjung theology and the Juche idea allowed the KCF and the NCKK to build a consensus around the issue of Korean reunification in theological terms beyond politics. In fact, since the exchanges between South-North Korean Protestantism, the KCF was able to develop and justify their theological identity within the Juche idea through communicating with the philosophy of Minjung theology.

The Social Impact of the NCKK-KCF Exchanges on South Korea

Another important driving force for inter-Korean Protestant relations alongside the NCKK was the WCC. Already discussed was the WCC's support for dialogue between the Korean Protestant Churches or for the Tozanso Process. Following these, the WCC initiated the first North-South Christian meetings in Glion, Switzerland, in September 1986 (NCKK, 1986a). This meeting, in which five North Korean and six South Korean church leaders participated, was originally designed as a seminar with the topic 'The Biblical and Theological Basis for Christians' Concern on Peace' (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). Since the first meeting, North and South Korean Protestants then met every two years in Glion for a total of three times until the 1990s (NCKK, 1990c).

Known as the Glion conferences, these meetings turned out to be not only the actual point of departure for inter-Korean Protestants' reunification movement, but also the first attempt to deal with national reunification at the non-governmental level in South Korea. After the meetings in Glion, the South Korean liberal Protestants attempted to create a new Korean reunification discourse.

However, the new discourse created in the Glion meetings, in many respects, reflected the DPRK's political interests. The eight recommendations included in the 'Glion Declaration on Peace and Reunification of Korea', adopted in the second Glion meeting, can be one example. Among the recommendations, we can see the advocacy of the confederation formula for reunification, the disapproval of intervention by foreign forces, the withdrawal of US troops from the South, and the replacement of the present armistice agreement to a peace treaty, consistently offered by the DPRK since the 1960s:

2. We reaffirm the three guiding principles for the 'reunification of the motherland' agreed between the North and South Korean governments in 1972, namely 'independence, peaceful reunification and great national unity.' We also confirm that the reunification process must honour and guarantee two existing systems in the spirit of peaceful coexistence, with the objective of building up one reunified country.

3. We affirm that the subject of the Korean reunification process is the people themselves, in both parts of the peninsula. Any foreign forces which have been involved in the division are therefore considered as stumbling blocks for peaceful

reunification and should be removed.

[...] 6. We demand a radical reduction of military forces, weapons and facilities in order to reduce tension and avoid military confrontation, thereby eliminating a major threat to peace and the reunification of Korea. For this, the present armistice agreement should be replaced by a peace treaty, a nonaggression declaration should be agreed upon, and substantial guarantees for peace and security should be provided for the whole Korean peninsula. On the basis of such measures, all foreign forces, including the US forces in South Korea, must be dissolved, and all nuclear weapons deployed or targeted upon the Korean Peninsula must be removed (WCC, 1988).

In fact, these recommendations had been already presented in a similar fashion in the 'Declaration for Peace and Reunification in the Korean Peninsula' in 1988, independently announced by South Korean Protestants shortly before the agreements in the Glion meetings between North and South Korean Protestantism. The so-called '88 Declaration was composed of six chapters: 'The Korean Christian Missiological Tradition in Advocating Justice and Peace'; 'The Current State of the Divided Peninsula'; 'Confession of the hatred of Fellow North Koreans since the Division of the Peninsula'; 'Korean Christianity's Fundamental Principles for Peaceful Reunification'; and 'Korean Christianity's Tasks to Achieve Peaceful Reunification.' Among the chapters, 'Korean Christianity's Fundamental Principles for Peaceful Reunification' and 'Korean Christianity's Tasks to Achieve Peaceful Reunification' included suggestions similar to the Glion recommendations:

- the emphasis on the independent right of Korean people for the Korean reunification (Principle No.1 ;Task No.5, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010)
- the withdrawal of the US military forces from the South, replacement of the present armistice agreement with a peace treaty, and the denuclearisation of the peninsular (Principle No.2;Task No.4, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010)
- unity of the Korean nation and the principles of trust and continuing exchange (Principle No.3; Task No.3, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010)
- the emphasis on democratic and people-oriented reunification movement, while opposing the government-led debate on reunification and its monopoly (Principle No.4;Task No.3, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010).

However, the most remarkable thing about this declaration was the disapproval of anti-communism in the chapter titled 'Confession of Hatred of Fellow North Koreans since the Division of the Peninsula'. In this chapter, the NCKK confessed that they had committed a sin by justifying their hatred and hostility to their brothers and sisters – North Korean people – in the blind pursuit of anti-communism.

1. [...] Due to the national division, we hated our brothers, and committed fratricide, and furthermore, we committed a double sin by justifying our crime in the name of ideology and politics. [...] Our Christians committed a sin by advocating the reinforcement of military power, thereby drawing foreign influences into the Korean Peninsula, and subordinating it to the Cold War system. In the process of

subordination, we Christians committed the sin of losing our national pride as well as the spirit of independence (Confession No.1, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010).

2. [...] Both South and North Korean Protestants idolised ideologies imposed by their respective regimes. This is treason against the authority of God, since the churches did not follow God but the political regimes. Particularly, Christians in the South confess to the sin of pronouncing a curse upon North Korean brothers and their communist regime with hostility, in the worship of anti-communism (Confession No.2, '88 Declaration, 1988, quoted in Lee, Y. 2010).

Although this declaration seems to describe the humanitarian principle that human needs should be considered before systems and ideologies, the core argument implicated in these confessions is that the NCCK admitted anti-communism was one of the major obstacles to Korean reconciliation. Furthermore, prioritising nationalism over the Cold War ideology (by highlighting national pride and the spirit of independence), the NCCK claimed that Korean reunification should be realised by bringing together Koreans both in the South and the North, regardless of their ideological differences. Kang In-Cheol argued that the declaration was the NCCK's official breakup with their former anti-communist ideology: 'anti-communism, which had been an ideological foundation sustaining the whole of Korean Protestantism, became the exclusive property of the conservative Protestants' (Kang, 2005:89).

Predictably, the KCF formally assented to the declaration by releasing a statement through

the [North] Korean Central News Agency (NCKA, 1988c). In this statement, the KCF introduced and gave their full approval to the suggestions made in the declaration, including the withdrawal of US military force, the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace treaty, and the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Despite its disapproval of anti-communism, it was interesting that this declaration was not seen as a violation of the National Security Law. At that time, the South Korean government, under the leadership of Roh Tae-Woo who took over the regime from Chun Doo-Hwan, was preparing for the upcoming 1988 Seoul Olympics. As the international community turned its attention on the Korean Peninsula, Roh's regime was careful in handling the activities of these Protestants, for fear that any signs of suppression would escalate into international issues. Also, the political sphere of South Korea was gradually making a transition towards liberalism, with the left winning majority in the general election of 1988. In this situation, the ROK regime showed a relatively tolerant attitude towards the pro-democracy movement.

It is in this light that the declaration was seen as the most notable non-governmental movement for Korean reunification by Korean liberal theologians. For example, Lee Yu-Na argued in her article 'The Unification Movement of the National Council of Churches in Korea and the Reunification Activities of Several Groups surrounding '88 Declaration', that this declaration made an impact not only on the Korean Protestant community, but also on general society and the Korean reunification movement in general. By encouraging non-governmental exchanges between the two Koreas, the declaration shifted the Korean reunification discourse from a government-oriented paradigm to a public-oriented one (Lee,

Y., 2010).

Furthermore, Kim Heung-Soo and Ryu Dae-Young (2002) claimed that apart from the non-governmental sector, the South Korean government was not immune from impact either. The '88 Declaration eventually affected the 7 July Agreed Framework of 1988 declared by Roh Tae-Woo's government, the 15 June Joint Declaration of 2000 by Kim Dae-Jung's government, and the 4 October Declaration of 2007 by Roh Moo-Hyun government's, all of which indicated the reconciliatory approach towards the North Korean regime. The two scholars argued that the 7 July Agreed Framework, which introduced the basic direction of reunification and South Korea's foreign policy towards socialist countries, especially embodied similar principles to the '88 Declaration: autonomy, peace, democracy, and a people-oriented approach, while excluding anti-communism. In this regard, the '88 Declaration marked a fundamental change in South Korea's approach towards North Korea, from a hostile policy based on anti-communism to a reconciliatory policy in the name of nationalism, which proved the function of Korean liberal Protestantism as total praxis.

The KCF's Achievements in Establishing a Historic Bloc

I will now analyse the DPRK's and the KCF's policies on inter-Korean relations from a Gramscian lens, particularly in terms of the construction of a historic bloc. As conceptualised in Chapter One, Gramsci suggested three essential conditions for the construction of a historic bloc (the complex circumstance which enabled a dominant group to exercise and maintain its power): a national-popular collective will, an active leadership, and organic cohesion between the groups.

a) A National-Popular Collective Will: National Reunification through Reconciliation

In order to establish a new hegemony, Gramsci argued that it is necessary to produce a moment when various forces and classes contributed towards a common goal in preserving their own autonomy. For the two Koreas, ever since the division of territory during the process of nation-building, Korean reunification has been the most significant mission on a national level. However, due to ideological and military conflicts between the South and the North, which reached their climax with the outbreak of the Korean War, the first two decades of the division catalogued a history of hostility between them. This hostility did not confine itself to relations between the two governments but was overtly expressed between the people of 'two countries'.

In their hostile relations came a turning point with the international atmosphere of détente in the Cold War during the 1970s. Witnessing the Sino-American rapprochement, both Koreas found that they could no longer rely on the superpowers regarding their military conflicts, and began to enunciate ostensibly a pragmatic and non-ideological policy towards each other, which led to the joint communiqué on 4 July 1972 between South and North Korea. The joint communiqué created a reconciliation discourse on the issue of national reunification established by both Korean regimes while rejecting military invasion. Since then, national reunification through reconciliation ostensibly became not only the common goal, but also moral issues in the name of nationalism. The unique Korean nationalism reflected in both South and North Korean Protestant Churches was also grounded on such a collective will towards national reunification.

b) An Ethical Leadership

Gramsci pointed out that moral and intellectual leadership must already be exercised before establishing a historic bloc. While the South Korean government was swamped by continual accusation of immorality due to its military dictatorship and human rights abuse in suppressing the pro-democracy movements, the North Korean regime attempted to gain ethical leadership on inter-Korean issues in the international milieu. With their active engagement in international communities including the UN since the 1970s, the DPRK leader's intention was to gain international consensus on their reunification policy. Through these diplomatic policies, the DPRK repeatedly stated to the international community that North Korea would not invade South Korea militarily.

Although these statements seemingly advocated peace, Armstrong (2013b) argued that they ultimately reflected the DPRK's recognition of their military inferiority to the US-ROK alliance. With these statements, however, the DPRK did not intend to mean that they would relinquish their power over the Korean Peninsula. Rather, by emphasising their reunification policy on peaceful coexistence between the two Koreas, the DPRK regime sought the ethical superiority over the ROK. This implicit intention was apparently exposed in Kim Il-Sung's conversation with Tokuma Utsunomiya, a former Japanese parliamentarian, in 1974: 'from the point of view of numbers and from the size of their air force, they are superior to us. What we excel in is the moral aspect' (Pearson, 2011).

Arguing on the one hand that 'a small country is being exposed to the threat of a great power', the DPRK and the KCF stressed that foreign forces were responsible for the division of Korea (Pearson, 2011). They utilised the nationalist discourse on the issue of Korean

reunification when facing the international community like the UN and the WCC. In particular, through the Protestant exchanges between the KCF and foreign ecumenical churches, North Korea pronounced that North Korean Protestantism had disappeared due to the US's attacks on church buildings in North Korea during the Korean War, resulting in strong antagonism towards Christianity. In the Protestant sphere, given the salient fact that North Korean Protestantism was the victim of interference from international super powers, the KCF successfully extracted apologies from ecumenical churches in the US, and furthermore, gained an international consensus within the ecumenical sector on the domestication of inter-Korean issues, the rejection of foreign interference, and the withdrawal of US troops from the Korean Peninsula.

On the other hand, the DPRK regime attempted to convince international society of its moral superiority by painting the South Korean dictatorial regime as a vicious one. As stated in Chapter Three, the KCF appeared on the international stage for the first time with a letter to the WCC, which condemned the South Korean government's suppression of pro-democracy movements. The KCF's support to South Korean Protestant-led anti-government movements indicated its denial of the authority of the ROK regime. In other words, the DPRK manifested antagonism and hostility towards the ROK regime, implying the ineligibility of the South Korean regime in the discussion of national reunification due to its immorality.

c) Organic and Emotional Cohesion on the Basis of Common Religious Identity

Finally, in order to establish a historic bloc, Gramsci argued that constant communication between different groups was necessary to develop proper knowledge and organisations.

Such communication would result in solidarity between different groups in forming a common identity. The exchanges between the KCF and anti-government Protestants in South Korea mirror this strategy. The DPRK regime intended to connect with these Protestants on the basis of religious identity via the exchanges.

This activity was specifically called ‘the united front strategy’ in North Korea. As previously discussed, the DPRK regime’s attention had been drawn to the anti-government movements led by liberal Protestants in South Korea since the 1960s. In the same interview with Utsunomiya in 1974, Kim Il-Sung mentioned the names of several anti-ROK government activists, such as the Catholic priest Ji Hak-Soon, and Kim Il-Sung stated that

[w]e will not advance [on the] South. [...] However, as for a revolution that arises naturally, we can’t guarantee it won’t take place. This is because, where there is suppression, revolutions arise. [...] If progressive people, people who desire peaceful reunification or people who advocate reduction of arms come to power, that would be good. [...] There are plenty of progressive people in South Korea. It’s these people that should take over power’ (Pearson, 2011).

As such, North Korea understood these anti-government movements as a prelude to social revolution in South Korea, and devised various strategies for a united front with anti-government activists in South Korea with the aim of the communising the Korean Peninsula.

Choi Se-Kyung argued in her PhD thesis, entitled *A Study on North Korea’s United Front*

Strategy (2005), that Protestant intellectuals and university students in South Korea were particularly targeted for the united front strategy, since the DPRK regime thought that their political consciousness was developed enough to pursue the communist ideology, compared to labourers or farmers who did not have the benefit of intellectual education.

As discussed earlier, through these exchanges, the KCF associated the DPRK's reunification policy with Korean Protestant values, such as the domestication of Korean issues and the exclusion of foreign forces, based on mutual common senses: nationalism, anti-Americanism, anti-ROK government sentiment, and a people-led approach to national reunification. What made this association possible was their common Protestantism identity, from the ecumenical stance.

As conceptualised in Chapter Two, [popular] religion is capable of operating a certain morality at its own level, predicated on the specific interpretations of people's cultural experiences, which are in discord with those of the dominant group's. In the case of the KCF and the NCKK, they could reach consensus on the issue of national reunification based on common ecclesiastical principles and history beyond the ideological gap. For example, in the WCC's report on their field investigations on North Korean Protestantism before the Glion meetings, there was an impressive description about the invisible bond between North-South Korean Protestantism, which had been disconnected for a long time since the Korean War:

[...]At the end of the encounter, Mr. Koshy presented to [North Korean] Pastor KO a gift from the National Council of Churches in [South] Korea. We had brought with us

six hymn books printed in South Korea, which the NCCCK had sent to us for presentation to Christians in the North. This gesture had been totally unexpected by our hosts, and the moment was filled with some emotion. It was clear to all in the room, including our official escorts, that we were carrying out a transaction that had been impossible for almost forty years. In response, Pastor KO presented to us copies of their newly-published Old and New Testaments, which I have meanwhile transmitted to the NCC-K (Weingartner, 1985:15).

In this respect, in order to facilitate the united front strategy in the Protestant sphere, the most significant task was to revive a proper ecclesiastical form within North Korean Protestant society.

The KCF's Failures in Inter-Korean Issues

In spite of these outstanding achievements (such as the '88 Declaration), the KCF ultimately failed to form a united front with South Korean Protestantism due to several incidents at the inter-Korean and international levels. First, as Park Myung-Soo argued (2009), the end of the international Cold War system following the dissolution of the Soviet Union negatively influenced the DPRK's leadership in inter-Korean relations. With the establishment of a series of diplomatic relations with former socialist regimes, particularly the normalisation of diplomatic relations with China in 1992 (much to the DPRK's opposition), the ROK government managed to consolidate its power on inter-Korean issues in the international community. Also, the collapse of the Soviets resulted in forming a US-centred world order in the 1990s. In this new world system, the Korean reunification discourse led by liberal-

nationalist Protestants gradually lost its strength.

Second, Kim Heung-Soo (2002) analysed that with a series of natural disasters in North Korea in the mid-1990s, the Korean reunification discourse has once again shifted from nationalism to anti-communism. NGO's testimonies on extreme poverty in North Korea as well as refugees' escape from North Korea to South Korea and other countries gave more weight to the ideological superiority of capitalism over communism, already insisted on by South Korean anti-communists, particularly the pro-American conservative Protestants.

These natural disasters also gave South Korean evangelical churches an opportunity to be involved in inter-Korean Protestant relations, from which they were previously excluded due to their different ideological identity (Kim, H. and Ryu, 2002). According to Kim Heung-Soo, it was a two-way reliance initially: the liberal Protestants were inadequate in fulfilling the KCF's requests and had to ask for material resources from the evangelical churches, while the evangelical churches needed the liberal churches' expertise to communicate with North Korea. However, in the process of cooperation, the NCKK lost its leadership in communication with the KCF. Also, the evangelical churches attempted to establish underground churches in North Korea, which once again alerted the North Korean regime to their possible association with US political objectives.

In particular, among the humanitarian aid programmes for North Korea, the participation of the Christian Council of [South] Korea, an anti-communist Protestant organisation founded in 1989 and representing 69 South Korean Protestant denominations, caused the most influential

shift in the discourse on North Korean Protestantism (Park, 2009). They systematically managed safe houses in China, prepared for North Korean refugees so as to spread evangelical conservatism, and encouraged converted North Korean refugees to give testimonies in churches on the DPRK government's suppression of Christianity (Han, 2013). In this way, an anti-North Korean discourse was produced again within the conservative Protestant sphere in South Korea.

Third, Kang In-Cheol (2009) argued that the political democratisation of South Korea led to the anti-government Protestants' loss of hegemony in South Korean society. These liberal Protestants used to justify their association with the KCF by aiming to overthrow dictatorship and democratising South Korea. However, with the left-leaning regime of Kim Dae-Jung and Noh Moo-Hyun, the KCF and the NCKK could no longer create anti-ROK government sentiments.

Fourth, Park Kwang-Soo (2009) and Bang Yeon-Sang (2013), South-Korean Theologians, commonly claimed that North Korea's ambivalent attitudes towards South Korea aroused distrust among South Korean people. In the course of engaging in the Protestant dialogues, North Korea practised a seemingly contradictory inter-Korean policy of military threat against South Korea and the US, including the withdrawal from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty in 1993. Due to this contradictory gesture on the DPRK's part, the liberal Protestants' demand of the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and the dissolution of the ROK-US military alliance could not gain consent from South Korean society.

Due to these social factors described above, the liberal Protestants were gradually excluded from mainstream of Protestantism in South Korea, and the KCF thereby lost its influence in both inter-Korean and international relations. In other words, the KCF became isolated by the consolidation of conservative Protestant power in political, economic, and diplomatic affairs.

Summary

This chapter elucidated the way in which the inter-Korean political issues were treated in the Protestant sphere, focusing on exchanges between the KCF, overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK, from the 1970s to the early 1990s. In this period, proposing the principles of reunification based on a confederal system, the DPRK achieved a certain degree of consensus from the liberal Protestants in South Korea as well as international ecumenical church communities, for measures such as the withdrawal of the US troops, the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace agreement with the US, and the exclusion of foreign interference on the issue of Korean reunification grounded on the right of self-determination. The DPRK regime aggressively sought alignment in the international milieu with these policies towards inter-Korean relations.

In the process, the DPRK also advocated their policies by participating in various international non-governmental organisations. The KCF's activities with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCKK were notable ones in terms of their outstanding achievements.

Each of the DPRK's approaches to overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK, can be analysed from a Gramscian perspective as follows. First, the KCF attempted to achieve moral ascendancy of the DPRK over the US and the ROK governments. On the one hand, with the claim that foreign powers, especially the US, were responsible for the division of Korea and for the collapse of North Korean Protestantism, the DPRK justified their insistence on the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and on the domestication of inter-Korean issues. On the other hand, the KCF supported the pro-democracy movements led by the liberal Korean Protestants against the South Korean dictatorial regime, thereby fostering antagonism to the ROK government.

Second, the KCF contributed to inculcating a new common sense into the discourse of Korean reunification, namely, a patriotic value. This patriotic value particularised Korean Protestantism. While condemning the pro-American character of Korean Protestantism during the bipolarised system of the Cold War, the KCF highlighted patriotism as a moral mission of Korean patriotism. In doing so, they attempted to shift the ideological orientation of Protestantism from anti-communism to Korean nationalism. With this shift, the DPRK expected to mitigate the anti-North Korean sentiments around the world as well as in South Korea, which would be helpful in forming a united front to counter the US hegemonic power in the non-governmental aspect.

Third, in order to gain consensus from their counterparts, the KCF appealed to the Protestant identity commonly shared by other Protestant organisations outside North Korea. Both the

DPRK and the KCF showed a cooperative attitude towards the WCC and NCKK with a full engagement in their field investigations into North Korean Protestantism, and their religious authenticity could be approved by demonstrating a proper ecclesiastical form. Based on this religious link, the KCF could gain contact with ecumenical societies outside North Korea.

Such policies conducted by the KCF resulted in assimilative behaviours from overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCKK. By obtaining a series of official statements and gestures in favour of the DPRK from their counterparts, the KCF partly fulfilled their implicit purpose through non-governmental diplomacy: the political ascendancy of the DPRK regime over the ROK regime. However, as natural disasters hit North Korea later, the focus of KCF's exchange activities changed from political orientation to economic aid. In the process of humanitarian aid, the NCKK lost its power in initiating communication with the KCF, while the pro-American evangelical churches distinguished themselves in aid activities with their wealth. This shift eventually had a negative impact on the KCF's diplomacy, as these pro-American Protestants resurrected the anti-North Korean sentiments again. The US-centred world-order in the 1990s, newly organised after the collapse of the Soviet bloc, was not helpful to the KCF either. Furthermore, the DPRK's constant military threats against the US and the ROK, which was contradictory to the KCF's peaceful approach to the Korean reunification, caused doubts on the sincerity of the KCF's activities.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the central question of why Protestantism became an object of tactical significance in the DPRK's management of its national culture and in its international relations. In exploring this question, I have focused on four inter-related aspects, which I have termed my research sub-questions: (1) Why was Protestantism significant in the process of DPRK nation-building? (2) Why did the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism change from the 1970s onwards? (3) Why was Protestantism significant in the development of the Juche idea? And (4) Why did the Korean Christian Federation come to play a role in the DPRK's international relations, and how significant was that role. I have focused mainly on the period between the 1970s and the early 1990s, although I have introduced longer historical perspectives where necessary.

In the 1970s, in pursuit of an advantageous position over the ROK regime on issues surrounding inter-Korean relations, the DPRK regime began to demonstrate a certain degree of flexibility in its foreign policy. However, in the mid-1970s, long-running disputes on inter-Korean issues in the UN General Assembly ended in a stalemate with no clear plan for achieving a generally acceptable compromise. At this point, the DPRK regime shifted its attention from the UN to international non-governmental organisations, overseas South Korean dissidents, and pro-democracy activists in South Korea. In order to form a united front against the ROK government, the DPRK regime established several non-governmental organisations in order to make contact with these groups, the KCF being one of these.

My main arguments concerning the KCF's exchanges with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC, and the NCCCK focused on two findings. First, the KCF's activities were political despite their religious identity. Through examining the exchanges between the KCF, overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCCCK, this thesis provided evidence that the DPRK regime revived the KCF for the political purpose of gaining the upper hand over the ROK government in dealing with inter-Korean issues. In particular, what the DPRK regime expected to gain from the KCF exchanges with Protestant organisations outside North Korea was *moral* ascendancy over the ROK government. During the Park Jung-Hee and Chun Doo-Hwan regimes between the 1960s and the 1980s, the DPRK regime noticed significant anti-government movements among Protestants in the South and abroad. By liaising with these Protestants, the DPRK regime sought to spread anti-South Korean sentiments in the hope of gaining an advantage over the South Korean regime.

Second, I also argued that what ultimately made the political association between the KCF and other Protestant organisations outside North Korea possible was their common religious identity from the ecumenical standpoint. The DPRK regime understood that the authenticity of North Korean Protestantism must be approved first by the South Korean and international Protestant communities, in order to associate the KCF with Protestantism outside North Korea. To establish the ties of religious kinship, the DPRK not only revived a proper ecclesiastical form, including building two churches in western style, but also transformed its national culture, represented in the Juche idea, to accommodate Protestant activities within North Korean society.

As such, the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism were not only confined within the religious sphere, but were also closely intertwined with politics. I therefore treated religious policies as an example of implicit cultural policy, and as an invisible political strategy that could produce relevant normative values to stabilise a regime.

The research framework selected was Gramsci's theory of hegemony (Chapter One). Gramsci's argument was that in modern civil society, the cultural sector is organically linked with political society (coercive measures). Assuming a hidden relationship between culture and power, Chapter Two conceptualised culture, cultural policy, and religion in Gramscian terms. In this chapter, I elucidated the crucial role of culture in the context of Gramsci's theory of hegemony. In this perspective, culture could be seen as mobilising the masses, the preparatory stage of gaining hegemony, by providing ethical standards of behaviours. According to Gramsci, when a new culture is developed at a national level by the fundamental social groups including organic intellectuals, it gains hegemonic power. At this stage, the culture does not purely belong to civil society any more, but it becomes a medium of connection between civil and political societies.

Gramsci also defined religious institutions as one of the agents of cultural policies, inculcating moral discipline for the purpose of promoting a certain ideological system within society. In analysing the functions of religion, Gramsci divided the meaning of religions into two categories: official religion (or religion of intellectuals) as an ideological state apparatus and popular religion (or religion of the people) as fragmentary and unstructured beliefs. According to him, the main role of official religion was to maintain the hegemonic power of

the dominant group, by organically linking the different groups of society on the basis of the mutually shared common sense. On the other hand, in Gramsci's concept, popular religion is identified as having the potential to promote an alternative hegemonic culture in opposition to the values pursued by official religion. He claimed that the development of popular religion could lead to the takeover of power through moral transformation. In this sense, Gramsci offers insight into the understanding of religious institutions or religious movements as a source of political power.

In this chapter, I also conceptualised religious institutions as agents of implicit cultural policy. Applying Gramsci's concept, I divided the strategies of these institutions into three categories: i) establishing an ethical leadership beyond the religious sphere; ii) propagating religious dogma as common sense in popular language; and iii) combining their values with political-ideological activities. By means of these strategies, Gramsci argued, religious institutions as cultural agents could effectively exercise their external power in the confluence of religious and secular factors (ideologies).

In Chapter Three, I examined changes in the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism. First, I explored the historical background of the DPRK's antagonism to Protestantism. In my analysis based on the theory of hegemony, the clash between the KWP and pro-American Protestants was not caused by the communists' unilateral suppression of Protestantism, but was complicatedly interwoven with the issues of class struggles and a revolutionary-patriotic framework. Furthermore, I also argued that not every Protestant opposed the communist regime but there were pro-communist Protestants who supported Kim Il-Sung and the KWP.

With these supporters, Kim Il-Sung established pro-communist Christian organisations that countered the pro-American Protestants, but these were abolished in the strong anti-Christian atmosphere after the Korean War.

I then examined the policies of the KCF, which was established by the DPRK regime in the early 1970s, in two categories: ecclesiastical and political. Ecclesiastically, these policies appeared to revive proper ecclesiastical form in North Korean society. They included the nation-wide survey on the Christian population and house churches; the publication of the Bible and hymnbook; the reopening of the Seminary for clerical training; and the foundation of new churches in a western style. However, the KCF also operated in the political sphere through its pro-government activities and its engagement in anti-South Korea propaganda. Also, it appeared that the revival of a proper ecclesiastical form was not for the need of the Protestant community in North Korea, but for international communication and for the establishment of the united front with the anti-government South Korean Protestants.

The changes in the religious sphere of North Korean society were paralleled by changes in constitutional laws, legal regulation on religion, definitions of official dictionaries, and Kim Il-Sung's interpretation of religion, discussed in the third section of Chapter Three. As far as legal regulation was concerned, due to negativity towards religion and hostility to Protestantism in particular after the war, it had been unnecessary to regulate religious activities strictly. However, following the re-establishment of the KCF, the 1992 revision of the DPRK's Constitution removed the clause on 'freedom of anti-religious propagation' and added a new sentence that 'no one may make use of religion to engage in activities that draw

in foreign influence or disrupt the national public order.’ There was also a significant revision of the concept of religion, including Protestantism – a change that refined, even eliminated, negative associations and connotations in the official definitions. This change implied that the DPRK government was willing to accept religious activities within North Korean society, provided that they did not violate the dominant ideology or threaten the existing political system.

Chapter Four examined the ideological relationship between Protestantism and the Juche idea, North Korea’s national ideology. Alongside the transformation of constitutional and legal regulations, the DPRK regime also modified its national ideology, to accommodate Protestantism. Juche had a different approach towards religion from other communist states. The DPRK regime initially showed its hostility to religion due to its unscientific aspects and its perceived feudalistic propensity, and as a result of the Korean War anti-Americanism. However, since the 1990s, the regime founded a theoretical linkage between Juche and religion in a positive way. Pointing out that Marxism-Leninism overlooked the human being’s capacity for autonomy, the DPRK regime claimed that the Juche idea could co-exist with the Christian doctrine, which could be seen to genuinely assert the emancipation of the poor and to oppose any kind of exploitation, invasion, or inequality.

On the other hand, the DPRK regime claimed that values asserted by religion should correspond to national interests. This claim can be assumed to be premised on the ambivalent activities of Protestantism in Korean history. On the one hand Protestantism certainly contributed to the nationalist movement for decolonisation. On the other hand, Korean

Protestantism was a main obstacle to the KWP in the nation-building process. In this respect, the DPRK regarded religion as a means for political-ideological purposes, and Protestantism could thus only be compatible with the Juche idea if it carried pro-government characteristics.

The shift of the Juche perspective on Protestantism reflected practical changes in the DPRK's policies towards Protestantism. In considering the doctrinal legitimacy of the KCF's activities, the international ecumenical churches raised the question whether genuine Protestant activities were possible in a society dominated by the Juche idea based on Marxism-Leninism. For the DPRK regime, it became necessary to show the ideological compatibility between the Protestant spirit and the Juche idea. The DPRK regime was then forced to modify the Juche idea in order to embrace anti-government Protestants in South Korea and overseas Korean Protestants and to establish a united front with them.

Chapter Five investigated the way in which the DPRK regime treated inter-Korean issues in the Protestant sphere, focusing on exchanges between the KCF, overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCKK, from the 1970s to the early 1990s. In this period, proposing the principles of reunification based on a confederal system, the DPRK regime achieved a certain degree of consensus with the liberal Protestants in South Korea as well as with international ecumenical church communities on issues such as the withdrawal of the US troops, the replacement of the armistice agreement with a peace agreement with the US, and the exclusion of foreign interference on the issue of Korean reunification grounded on the right of self-determination.

My analysis in this chapter, based on a Gramscian perspective, revealed what the KCF intended to gain through its exchanges with overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCCCK. First, the KCF attempted to achieve moral ascendancy for the DPRK over the US and the ROK governments. With the claim that the US was responsible for the division of Korea and for the collapse of North Korean Protestantism, the DPRK justified its insistence on the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea and on the domestication of inter-Korean issues. Also, the KCF gave its support to the pro-democracy movements led by liberal Korean Protestants against the dictatorial regime of the ROK, thereby encouraging antagonism to the ROK government.

Second, criticising the pro-American character of Korean Protestantism in the bipolarised Cold War system, the KCF contributed to inculcating patriotic values into the Korean Protestant sphere as a new common sense. In doing so, the KCF attempted to shift the ideological orientation of Protestantism from anti-communism to Korean nationalism, thereby mitigating the anti-North Korean sentiments in South Korea and around the world.

Third, the ecclesiastical form of North Korean Protestantism revived by the DPRK and the KCF was helpful in gaining consensus from Protestants outside North Korea. The DPRK and the KCF showed a cooperative attitude towards the WCC and the NCCCK with a full engagement in the latter's field investigations into North Korean Protestantism. The demonstration of a proper ecclesiastical form offered evidence of an authentic religious practice, which in turn helped to establish ties based on religious kinship from the ecumenical standpoint. The KCF was thus able to assert more effectively its political stance on inter-

Korean issues on behalf of the DPRK regime.

These policies by the KCF induced assimilative behaviour from overseas Korean Protestants, the WCC and the NCKK. By obtaining a series of official statements and gestures in favour of the DPRK from its counterparts, the KCF partly fulfilled its implicit purpose through Protestant exchanges: the moral ascendancy of the DPRK regime over the ROK regime. However, the KCF failed to fulfil its ultimate goal: to form a united front with Protestants outside North Korea against the ROK regime. This was due to several incidents at the inter-Korean and international levels, including the collapse of the Soviet bloc, the democratisation of the South Korean political system, the ROK's improvement of diplomatic relations with former communist regimes, and a series of natural disasters in North Korea. Among them, the occurrence of natural disasters changed the focus of the KCF's diplomatic activities from political orientation to economic aid, and in this process, the NCKK conceded its leadership in communicating with the KCF to the pro-American evangelical churches, which distinguished themselves with their wealth in providing aid to North Korea. This shift ultimately had a negative impact on the KCF's international stance, as pro-American Protestants in South Korea revived the anti-North Korean sentiments.

Through this thesis, we see that Protestant activities of the KCF, the NCKK, and the WCC pursued political goals despite their religious identity. However, there is evidence that the KCF's activities were not entirely geared towards political issues in inter-Korean relations, but also positively influenced the transformation of North Korea's religious sphere. The thesis outlined some big improvements in Protestant activities and legal regulations on the

freedom of religion in North Korea. Also, international and South Korean Protestants encouraged the KCF to build churches in western style, which led to the re-emergence of official churches in Pyongyang with a western congregational form, as mentioned in Chapter Three. These fundamental changes in North Korea's religious sphere were built on the basis of mutual understanding of the cultural and historical differences between North Korea and South Korea and beyond. Above all, these were the result of repeated, active and tolerant engagement and interaction between internal (the KCF) and external (the WCC and the NCCCK) stakeholders.

In fact, through the diplomatic achievements, the KCF enhanced its social status within the regime. There were highly influential figures in the international community, such as Billy Graham, and among the Protestant leaders who communicated with the KCF or visited Pyongyang. The friendship with American churches especially elevated the KCF to a powerful position within the DPRK from the 1990s, when the North Korean regime sought to improve US-DPRK relations. When American church leaders met with high-ranking officials of the DPRK, the KCF members always sat in company with them. The KCF's appearance between the Supreme Leader and the US Protestant leaders implied a status elevation of Protestantism in North Korean society. According to my interviews with both Noh Jung-Sun's (2013) and Erich Weingartner (2014), between the 1970s and the 1980s the KCF was only passively engaged in the works issued by the superior authority, such as the Committee on the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland, or the Committee on the Support of Overseas Koreans. However, since the 1990s, the KCF began to carry out its works independently from governmental designation.

Ultimately, the transformation of the North Korea's Protestant sphere was derived from the KCF's political and diplomatic achievements in inter-Korean and international relations. This aspect corresponds with Gramsci's theory that civil and political societies are technically not separated from each other, but rather are interrelated organically. I argued in this thesis that the hypothesis that religious faith is apolitical is a myth, at least in the case of the KF's exchanges with other organisations, and that each religion pursues different ethical standards and normative values according to their political-ideological orientation.

In the current situation where the DPRK is no longer able to form a united front, the DPRK still maintains the KCF's status and accommodates its religious activities within North Korean society as well as in international communities. In the last WCC conference held in Switzerland in June 2014, the KCF spoke of its pursuit of a new relationship with the international church community. Kang Myong-Cheol, the young KCF leader subordinate to the chairman, appeared on the international stage for the first time. According to Erich Weingartner, Kang impressed Western church members at this conference. With his casual attitude, deep understanding of the Bible and polished eloquence, he apparently contrasted sharply with his predecessors, who were usually careful in their speeches and stuck to the prepared text.

Most significantly, Weingartner reported that when the WCC members attempted to present their plans of humanitarian support to the DPRK, the delegations from the DPRK made clear that they no longer needed humanitarian aid and that they would be focusing in future on

religious exchanges with South Korea and ecumenical churches around the world. We can see that this changed stance on humanitarian aid implies the start of a new chapter in Protestant exchanges between the KCF and other countries. For this reason, further research on the KCF's activities should be encouraged and continue alongside studies of inter-Korean relations.

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